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THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

### UNIFORM WITH THIS BOOK

## THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

by
WILLIAM LAW, M.A.

LONDON GRIFFITH FARRAN & CO.

NEWBERY HOUSE, 39 CHARING CROSS ROAD

THE

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OF SECURE SEVINGE

# LOVE

IN

#### DIALOGUES

By WILLIAM LAW, M.A. AUTHOR OF "A SERIOUS CALL"



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#### THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

#### THE FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Theogenes, Eusebius, and Theophilus.

#### Theogenes.

DEAR THEOPHILUS, this gentleman is Eusebius, a very valuable and worthy curate in my neighbourhood; he would not let me wait any longer for your second letter on the Spirit of Love, nor be content till I consented to our making you this visit. And indeed we are both on the same errand, and in equal impatience to have your full answer to that part of my objection which you reserved for a second letter.

Theophilus.—My heart embraces you both with the greatest affection, and I am much pleased at the occasion of your coming, which calls me to the most delightful subject in the world, to help both you and myself to rejoice in that adorable Deity, whose infinite being is an infinity of mere love, and unbeginning,

5

never-ceasing, and for ever overflowing ocean of meekness, sweetness, delight, blessing, goodness, patience, and mercy; and all this, as so many blessed streams breaking out of the abyss of universal love. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a triune infinity of love and goodness, for ever and ever, giving forth nothing but the same gifts of light and love, of blessing and joy, whether before or after the fall, either of angels or men.

Look at all nature, through all its height and depth, in all its variety of working powers, it is what it is for this only end, that the hidden riches, the invisible powers, blessings, glory, and love of the unsearchable God may become visible, sensible, and manifest in it and

by it.

Look at all the variety of creatures, they are what they are for this only end, that in their infinite variety, degrees, and capacities they may be as so many speaking figures, living forms of the manifold riches and powers of nature, as so many sounds and voices, preachers and trumpets, giving glory, and praise, and thanksgiving to that Deity of love, which gives life to all nature and creature.

For every creature of unfallen nature, call it by what name you will, has its form, and power, and state, and place in nature for no other end but to open and enjoy, to manifest and rejoice in some share of the love, and happiness, and goodness of the Deity, as springing forth in the boundless height and depth of nature.

Now this is the one will and work of God, in and through all nature and creature. From eternity to eternity He can will and intend nothing towards them, in them, or by them, but the communication of various degrees of His own love, goodness, and happiness to them, according to their state, and place, and capacity in nature. This is God's unchangeable disposition towards the creature; He can be nothing else but all goodness towards it, because He can be nothing towards the creature but that which He is, and was, and ever shall be in Himself.

God can no more begin to have any wrath, rage, or anger in Himself, after nature and creature are in a fallen state, than He could have been infinite wrath and boundless rage, everywhere, and from all eternity. For nothing can begin to be in God, or to be in a new state in Him; every thing that is in Him is essential to Him, as inseparable from Him, as unalterable in Him, as the triune nature of His Deity.

Theogenes.—Pray, Theophilus, let me ask you, Does not patience, and pity, and mercy begin to be in God, and only then begin, when the creature has brought itself into misery? They could have no existence in the Deity before. Why then may not a wrath and anger begin to be in God, when the creature has rebelled against Him, though it neither had nor could have any existence in God before?

Theophilus.-'Tis true, Theogenes, that

God can only then begin to make known His mercy and patience, when the creature has lost its rectitude and happiness; yet nothing then begins to be in God, or to be found in Him, but that which was always in Him, in the same infinite state, viz. a will to all goodness, and which can will nothing else. And His patience and mercy, which could not show forth themselves till nature and creature had brought forth misery, were not new tempers, or the beginning of some new disposition that was not in God before, but only new and occasional manifestations of that boundless, eternal will to all goodness which always was in God in the same height and depth. The will to all goodness, which is God Himself. began to display itself in a new way, when it first gave birth to creatures. The same will to all goodness began to manifest itself in another new way, when it became patience and compassion towards fallen creatures. But neither of these ways are the beginning of any new tempers or qualities in God, but only new and occasional manifestations of that true eternal will to all goodness, which always was, and always will be, in the same fulness of infinity in God.

But to suppose that when the creature has abused its power, lost its happiness, and plunged itself into a misery out of which it cannot deliver itself, to suppose that then there begins to be something in the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost that is not of the nature and essence of God, and which was not there before, viz. a wrath, and fury, and vindictive vengeance, breaking out in storms of rage and resentment, because the poor creature has brought misery upon itself, is an impiety and absurdity that cannot be enough abhorred. For nothing can be in God but that which He is and has from Himself, and therefore no wrath can be in the Deity itself, unless God was n Himself, before all nature and from all eternity, an infinity of wrath.

Why are love, knowledge, wisdom, and goodness said to be infinite and eternal in God, capable of no increase or decrease, but always in the same highest state of existence? Why is His power eternal and omnipotent, His presence not here or there, but everywhere the same? No reason can be assigned, but because nothing that is temporary, limited, or bounded can be in God. It is His nature to be that which He is, and all that He is, in an infinite, unchangeable degree, admitting neither higher nor lower, neither here nor there, but always and everywhere in the same unalterable state of infinity. If therefore wrath, rage, and resentment could be in the Deity itself, it must be an unbeginning, boundless, and never-ceasing wrath, capable of no more or less, no up or down, but always existing, always working, and breaking forth in the same strength, and everywhere equally burning in the height and depth of the abyssal Deity. There is no medium here; there must be either

all or none, either no possibility of wrath, or no possibility of its having any bounds. And therefore if you would not say that everything that has, or can, or ever shall proceed from God, are and can be only so many effects of His eternal and omnipotent wrath, which can never cease or be less than infinite, if you will not hold this monstrous blasphemy, you must stick close to the absolute impossibility of wrath having any existence in God. For nothing can have any existence in God but in the way and manner as His eternity, infinity, and omnipotence have their existence in Him. Have you any

thing to object to this?

Theogenes.-Indeed, Theophilus, both Eusebius and myself have been from the first fully satisfied with what hath been said of this matter in the Book of Regeneration, the Appeal, and the Spirit of Prayer, etc. We find it impossible to think of God as subject to wrath, or capable of being inflamed by the weakness, and folly, and irregularity of the creature. We find ourselves incapable of thinking any otherwise of God than as the one only good, or, as you express it, an eternal immutable will to all goodness, and which can will nothing else to all eternity, but to communicate good, and blessing, and happiness, and perfection to every life, according to its capacity to receive it.

Had I an hundred lives, I could with more ease part with them all, by suffering an hundred deaths, than give up this

lovely idea of God. Nor could I have any desire of eternity for myself, if I had not hopes that, by partaking of the divine nature. I should be eternally delivered from the burden and power of my own wrath, and changed into the blessed freedom of a spirit that is all love, and a mere will to nothing but goodness. An eternity without this is but an eternity of trouble. For I know of no hell, either here or hereafter, but the power and working of wrath; nor any heaven but where the God of love is all in all, and the working life of all. And therefore, that the holy Deity is all love, and blessing, and goodness, willing and working only love and goodness to every thing, as far as it can receive it, is a truth as deeply grounded in me as the feeling of my own existence. I ask you for no proof of this; my only difficulty is, how to reconcile this idea of God to the letter of Scripture. First, because the Scripture speaks so much and so often of the wrath, and fury, and vindictive vengeance of God. Secondly, because the whole nature of our redemption is so plainly grounded on such a supposed degree of wrath and vengeance in God, as could not be satisfied, appeased, and atoned by any thing less than the death and sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God.

Theophilus.—I will do more for you, Theogenes, in this matter than you seem to expect. I will not only reconcile the letter of Scripture with the foregoing description of God, but will show you that every thing that is said of the necessity of Christ's being the only possible satisfaction and atonement of the vindictive wrath of God, is a full and absolute proof that the wrath of God spoken of never was, nor is, or possibly can be in God.

Eusebius .- Oh, Theophilus, you have forced me now to speak, and I cannot contain the joy that I feel in this expectation which you have raised in me. If you can make the Scriptures do all that which you have promised to Theogenes, I shall be in Paradise before I die. to know that love alone was the beginning of nature and creature, that nothing but love encompasses the whole universe of things, that the governing hand that overrules all, the watchful eye that sees through all, is nothing but omnipotent and omniscient love, using an infinity of wisdom to raise all that is fallen in nature, to save every misguided creature from the miserable works of its own hands, and make happiness and glory the perpetual inheritance of all the creation, is a reflection that must be quite ravishing to every intelligent creature that is sensible of it. Thus to think of God, of providence, and eternity, while we are in this valley and shadow of death. is to have a real foretaste of the blessings of the world to come. Pray, therefore, let us hear how the letter of Scripture is a proof of this God of love.

Theophilus.—Before I do this, Eusebius, I think it requisite to show you, in a word or two, the true ground and

nature of wrath in all its kinds, what it is in itself, whence it has its birth, life, and manner of existence. And then you will see with your own eyes why, and how, and where wrath or rage can or cannot be. And until you see this fundamentally in the nature of things, you cannot be at all qualified to judge of the matter in question, but must only think and speak at random merely as your imagination is led by the sound of words. For until we know in the nature of the thing what wrath is in itself, and why and how it comes into existence, wherever it is, we cannot say where it can enter or where it cannot. Nor can we possibly know what is meant by the satisfaction, appeasement, or atonement of wrath in any being, but by knowing how, and why, and for what reason wrath can rise and work in any being, and then only can we know how any wrath, wherever raised, can be atoned, or made to cease.

Now there are two things, both of them visible to your outward senses, which entirely open the true ground and nature of wrath, and undeniably show what it is in itself, from whence it arises, and wherein its life, and strength, and being consists. And these two things are a tempest in the elements of this world, and a raging sore in the body of man, or any other animal. Now that a tempest in the elements is wrath in the elements, and a sore in the body of an animal, a wrath in the state or juices of the body is a matter, I think, that

needs no proof or explication. Consider then how or why a tempest arises in the elements, or an inflamed sore in the body, and then you have the true ground and nature of wrath. Now a tempest does not, cannot arise in the elements whilst they are in their right state, in their just mixture or union one with another. A sore does not, cannot break forth in the body whilst the body is altogether in its true state and

temperature of its juices.

Hence you plainly see that wrath hath its whole nature and only ground of its existence in and by the disorder or bad state of the thing in which it exists and works. It can have no place of existence, no power of breaking forth but where the thing has lost its proper perfection, and is not as it ought to be. And therefore no good being, that is in its proper state of goodness, can, whilst it is in such a state, have any wrath or rage in it. And, therefore, as a tempest of any kind in the elements is a sure proof that the elements are not in their right state, but under disorder, as a raging sore in the body, is a certain indication that the body is impure and corrupt, and not as it should be; so, in whatever mind, or intelligent being, wrath or rage works and breaks forth, there, there is proof enough, that the mind is in that same impure, corrupt, and disordered state as those elements that raise a tempest, and that body which gives forth an inflamed sore.

And now, gentlemen, what think you of

a supposed wrath or rage in God; will you have such things to be in the Deity itself as cannot have place or existence even in any creature, until it is become disordered and impure, and has lost its proper state of goodness?

Eusebius.-But pray, Theophilus, let me observe that it does not yet appear to me that there is but one wrath possible to be in nature and creature. I grant there is such a likeness in the things you have appealed to, as is sufficient to justify poets, orators, or popular speakers in calling a tempest wrath, and wrath a tempest. But this will not do in our present matter; for all that you have said depends upon this, whether, in a philosophic strictness in the nature of the thing, there can only be one wrath, wherever it is, proceeding strictly from the same ground, and having everywhere the same nature. Now if you can prove this identity, or sameness of wrath, be it where it will, either in an intelligent mind, the elements of this world, or the body of an animal, then your point is absolutely gained, and there can be no possibility for wrath to have any existence in the Deity. But as body and spirit are generally held to be quite contrary to each other in their most essential qualities, I do not know how you can sufficiently prove that they can only have one kind of wrath, or that wrath must have one and the same ground and nature, whether it be in body or spirit.

Theophilus.-Wrath can have no

better or other ground and nature in body than it has in spirit, for this reason, because it can have no existence or manner of working in the body but what it has directly from spirit. And therefore, in every wrath that is visible in any body whatever, you have a true manifestation of the ground and nature of wrath, in whatever spirit it is. And therefore, as there is but one ground and nature of wrath in all outward things, whether they be animate or inanimate. so you have proof enough that so it is with all wrath in the spirit or mind. Because wrath in any body, or outward thing, is nothing else but the inward working of that spirit which manifests itself by an outward wrath in the body.

And what we call wrath in the body is, truly and strictly speaking, the wrath

of the spirit in the body.

For you are to observe that body begins not from itself, nor is anything of itself, but is all that it is, whether pure or impure, has all that it has, whether of light or darkness, and works all that it works, whether of good or evil, merely from spirit. For nothing, my friend, acts in the whole universe of things but spirit alone. And the state, condition and degree of every spirit is only and solely opened by the state, form, condition, and qualities of the body that belongs to it. For the body can have no nature, form, condition, or quality but that which the spirit that brings it forth gives to it.

Was there no eternal, universal spirit, there could be no eternal or universal nature; that is, was not the Spirit of God everywhere, the kingdom of heaven, or the visible glory of God in an outward majesty of heaven, could not be everywhere. Now the kingdom of heaven is that to the Deity which every body is to the spirit which liveth, worketh, and manifesteth itself in it. But the kingdom of heaven is not God, yet all that it is, and has, and does is only an outward manifestation of the nature, power, and working of the Spirit of God.

It is thus with every creaturely spirit, and its body, which is the habitation, or seat of its power, and as the spirit is in its nature, kind, and degree, whether heavenly, earthly, or hellish, so is its body. Was there not creaturely spirits, there could be no creaturely bodies. And the reason why there are creaturely bodies of such various forms, shapes, and powers, is because spirits come forth from God in various kinds and degrees of life, each manifesting its own nature, power, and condition, by that body which proceeds from it, as its own birth, or the manifestation of its own powers.

Now the spirit is not body, nor is the body spirit; they are so essentially distinct, that they cannot possibly lose their difference, or be changed into one another; and yet all that is in the body, is from the nature, will, and working of its spirit. There is therefore no

possible room for a supposition of two kinds of wrath, or that wrath may have two natures, the one as it is in spirit, and the other as it is in body; first, because nothing can be wrathful but spirit; and, secondly, because no spirit can exert or manifest wrath, but in and by its body. The kindling its own body is the spirit's only wrath. And therefore, through the whole universe of things, there is, and can be, but one possible ground and nature of wrath, whether it be in the sore of an animal body, in a tempest of the elements, in the mind of a man, in an angel, or in hell.

Eusebius. — Enough, enough, Theophilus. You have made it sufficiently plain, that wrath can be no more in God Himself, than hell can be heaven. And therefore we ask no more of you, but only to reconcile this with the language and doctrine of the holy Scriptures.

Theogenes. — You are in too much haste, Eusebius; it would be better to let Theophilus proceed farther in this matter. He has told us what wrath is in itself; be it where it will, I should be glad to know its one true original, or how, and where, and why it could possibly begin to be.

Theophilus.—To inquire or search into the origin of wrath, is the same thing as to search into the origin of evil and sin: for wrath and evil are but two words for one and the same thing. There is no evil in anything, but the working of the spirit of wrath. And when wrath is entirely suppressed, there can be no more

evil, or misery, or sin in all nature and creature. This, therefore, is a firm truth, that nothing can be capable of wrath, or be the beginning of wrath, but the creature, because nothing but the creature can be the beginner of evil and sin.

Again, the creature can have no beginning; or sensibility of wrath in itself, but by losing the living power, the living presence, and governing operation of the Spirit of God within it; or, in other words, by its losing that heavenly state of existence in God, and influence from Him, which it had at its creation.

Now no intelligent creature, whether angel or man, can be good and happy, but by partaking of, or having in itself, a twofold life. Hence so much is said in the Scripture of an inward and outward. an old and a new man .- For there could he no foundation for this distinction, but because every intelligent creature, created to be good and happy, must of all necessity have a twofold life in it, or it cannot possibly be capable of goodness and happiness, nor can it possibly lose its goodness and happiness, or feel the least want of them, but by its breaking the union of this twofold life in itself. Hence so much is said in the Scripture of the quickening, raising, and reviving the inward new man, of the new birth from above, of Christ being formed in us, as the one only redemption and salvation of the soul. Hence also the fall of Adam was said to be a death, that he died the day of his sin, though he lived so many hundred years after it; it was because his sin broke the union of his twofold life, and put an end to the heavenly part of it, and left only one life, the life of this

bestial, earthly world in him.

Now there is, in the nature of the thing, an absolute necessity of this twofold life in every creature that is to be good and happy; and the twofold life is this, it must have the life of nature and the life of God in it. It cannot be a creature, and intelligent, but by having the life and properties of nature; that is, by finding itself to be a life of various sensibilities, that hath a power of understanding, willing, and desiring: this is its creaturely life, which, by the creating power of God, it hath in and from nature.

Now this is all the life that is or can be creaturely, or be a creature's natural, own life; and all this creaturely natural life, with all its various powers and sensibilities, is only a life of various appetites, hungers, and wants, and cannot possibly be anything else. God Himself cannot make a creature to be in itself, or as to its own nature, any thing else but a state of emptiness, of want, of appetite. etc. He cannot make it to be good and happy, in and from its natural state: this is as impossible, as for God to cease to be the one only good. The highest life therefore, that is natural and creaturely, can go no higher than this; it can only be a bare capacity for goodness and happiness, and cannot possibly be a good and happy life, but by the life of God dwelling in and in union with it. And this is the twofold life, that of all necessity must be united in every good, and perfect, and happy creature.

See here the greatest of all demonstrations of the absolute necessity of the gospel redemption and salvation, and all proved from the nature of the thing. There can be no goodness and happiness for any intelligent creature, but in and by this twofold life; and therefore the union of the divine and human life, or the Son of God incarnate in man, to make man again a partaker of the divine nature, is the one only possible salvation for all the sons of fallen Adam; that is, of Adam dead to, or fallen from, his first union with the divine life.

.Deism therefore, or a religion of nature, pretending to make man good and happy without Christ, or the Son of God entering into union with the human nature, is the greatest of all absurdities. It is as contrary to the nature and possibilities of things, as for mere emptiness to be its own fulness, mere hunger to be its own food, and mere want to be its possession of all things. For nature and creature, without the Christ of God or the divine life in union with it, is and can be nothing else but this mere emptiness, hunger, and want of all that which can alone make it good and happy. For God Himself, as I said, cannot make any creature to be good and happy by any thing that is in its own created nature;

and however high or noble any creature is supposed to be created, its height and nobility can consist in nothing but its higher capacity and fitness to receive a higher union with the divine life, and also a higher and more wretched misery when left to itself, as is manifest by the hellish state of the fallen angels. Their high and exalted nature was only an enlarged capacity for the divine life; and therefore, when this life was lost, their whole created nature was nothing else but the height of rage and hellish distraction.

A plain demonstration that there can be no happiness, blessing, and goodness for any creature in heaven or on earth, but by having, as the gospel saith, Jesus Christ made unto it wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and peace with God.

And the reason is this: it is because goodness and happiness are absolutely inseparable from God, and can be nowhere but in God. And, on the other hand, emptiness, want, insufficiency, etc., are absolutely inseparable from the creature, as such; its whole nature cannot possibly be any thing else, be it what or where it will, an angel in heaven, or a man on earth; it is and must be in its whole creaturely nature and capacity a mere hunger and emptiness, etc. And therefore all that we know of God, and all that we know of the creature, fully proves that the life of God in union with the creaturely life (which is the gospel salvation) is the one only possibility of goodness and happiness in any creature, whether in heaven or on earth.

Hence also it is enough certain, that this twofold life must have been the original state of every intelligent creature, at its first coming forth from God. It could not be brought forth by God, to have only a creaturely life of nature, and be left to that; for that would be creating it under a necessity of being in misery, in want, in wrath, and all painful sensibilities. A thing more unworthy of God, and more impossible for Him to do, than to create numberless earthly animals under a necessity of being perpetually pained with hunger and thirst, without any possibility of finding any thing to eat or to drink.

For no creaturely life can, in itself, be any higher or better than a state of want, or a seeking for some thing that cannot be found in itself, and therefore, as sure as God is good, as sure as He would have intelligent beings live a life of goodness and happiness, so sure is it that such beings must of all necessity, in their first existence, have been blessed with a twofold life, viz. the life of God dwelling in, and united with, the life of nature or created life.

Eusebius.—What an important matter have you here proved in the necessity and certainty of this twofold life in every intelligent being that is to be good and happy. For this great truth opens and asserts the certain and substantial ground of the spiritual life, and shows that all salvation is and can be nothing

else, but the manifestation of the life of God in the soul. How clearly does this give the solid distinction between inward holiness and all outward, creaturely practices. All that God has done for man by any particular dispensations, whether by the law, or the prophets, by the Scriptures, or ordinances of the Church, are only as helps to an holiness which they cannot give, but are only suited to the death and darkness of the earthly, creaturely life, to turn it from itself, from its own workings, and awaken in it a faith and hope, a hunger and thirst, after that first union with the life of the Deity, which was lost in the fall of the first father of mankind.

How unreasonable is it to call perpetual inspiration fanaticism and enthusiasm, when there cannot be the least degree of goodness or happiness in any intelligent being, but what is in its whole nature, merely and truly the breathing, the life, and the operation of God in the life of the creature? For if goodness can only be in God, if it cannot exist separate from Him, if He can only bless and sanctify, not by a creaturely gift, but by Himself becoming the blessing and sanctiffcation of the creature, then it is the highest degree of blindness to look for any goodness and happiness from anything but the immediate indwelling, union, and operation of the Deity in the life of the creature. Perpetual inspiration, therefore, is in the nature of the thing as necessary to a life of goodness,

holiness, and happiness, as the perpetual respiration of the air is necessary to animal life.

For the life of the creature, whilst only creaturely, and possessing nothing but itself, is hell; that is, it is all pain, and want, and distress. Now nothing in the nature of the thing can make the least alteration in this creaturely life, nothing can help it to be in light and love, in peace and goodness, but the union of God with it, and the life of God working in it, because nothing but God is light, and love, and heavenly goodness. And therefore, where the life of God is not become the life and goodness of the creature, there the creature cannot have the least degree of goodness in it.

What a mistake is it therefore to confine inspiration to particular times and occasions, to prophets and apostles, and extraordinary messengers of God! and to call it enthusiasm, when the common Christian looks and trusts to be continually led and inspired by the Spirit of God. For though all are not called to be prophets or apostles, yet all are called to be holy, as He who hath called them is holy, "to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect, to be likeminded with Christ," to will only as God wills, to do all to His honour and glory, to renounce the spirit of this world, to have their conversation in heaven, to set their affections on things above, to love God with all their heart, soul, and spirit, and their neighbour as themselves.

Behold a work as great, as divine,

and supernatural, as that of a prophet and an apostle. But to suppose that we ought, and may always be in this spirit of holiness, and yet are not, and ought not to be always moved and led by the breath and spirit of God within us, is to suppose that there is a holiness and goodness which comes not from God; which is no better than supposing that there may be true prophets and apostles who have not their truth from God.

Now the holiness of the common Christian is not an occasional thing, that begins and ends, or is only for such a time, or place, or action, but is the holiness of that which is always alive and stirring in us, namely, of our thoughts, wills, desires, and affections. If, therefore, these are always alive in us, always driving or governing our lives, if we can have no holiness or goodness but as this life of thought, will, and affection works in us, if we are all called to this inward holiness and goodness, then a perpetual, always existing operation of the Spirit of God within us is absolutely necessary. For we cannot be inwardly led and governed by a spirit of goodness, but by being governed by the Spirit of God Himself. For the Spirit of God and the spirit of goodness are not two spirits, nor can we be said to have any more of the one than we have of the other.

Now if our thoughts, wills, and affections need only be now and then holy and good, then, indeed, the moving and breathing Spirit of God need only now and then govern us. But if our thoughts and affections are to be always holy and good, then the holy and good Spirit of God is to be always operating as a principle of life within us.

The Scripture saith, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought." If so, then we cannot be chargeable with not thinking and willing that which is good, but upon this supposition, that there is always a supernatural power within us, ready and able to help us to the good which we cannot have from ourselves.

The difference then of a good and a bad man does not lie in this, that the one wills that which is good, and the other does not; but solely in this, that the one concurs with the living, inspiring Spirit of God within him, and the other resists it, and is and can be only chargeable with evil because he resists it.

Therefore whether you consider that which is good or bad in a man, they equally prove the perpetual indwelling and operation of the Spirit of God within us, since we can only be bad by resisting, as we are good by yielding to, the Spirit of God; both which equally suppose a perpetual operation of the Spirit of God within us.

How firmly our Established Church adheres to this doctrine of the necessity of the perpetual operation of the Holy Spirit, as the one only source and possibility of any degree of divine light, wisdom, virtue, and goodness in the soul of man, how earnestly she wills and requires all her members to live in the most open profession of it, and in the highest conformity to it, may be seen by many such prayers as these in her common,

ordinary, public service.

O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. Again. We pray Thee that Thy grace may ALWAYS prevent and follow us, and make us CONTINUALLY to be given to all good works. Again, Grant to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, the spirit to think and do ALWAYS such things as be rightful, that we, who cannot do ANY THING that is good WITHOUT Thee, may, by Thee, be enabled to live according to Thy will. Again, Because the frailty of man, WITHOUT Thee, CANNOT BUT FALL, keep us EVER, by Thy help, from all things hurtful, and LEAD us to all things profitable to our salvation, etc. Again, O God, from whom all good things do come, grant to us Thy humble servants, that by THY holy INSPI-RATION we may THINK those things that be good, and by Thy merciful GUIDING may PERFORM the same. - But now the true ground of all this doctrine of the necessity of the perpetual guidance and operation of the Holy Spirit, lies in what has been said above, of the necessity of a twofold life

in every intelligent creature that is to be good and happy. For if the creaturely life, whilst alone or left to itself, can only be want, misery, and distress, if it cannot possibly have any goodness or happiness in it, till the life of God is in union with it, as one life, then every thing that you read in the Scripture of the Spirit of God, as the only principle of goodness, opens itself to you, as a most certain and blessed truth, about which you can have no doubt.

Theophilus.-Let me only add, Eusebius, to what you have said, that from this absolute necessity of a twofold life in every creature that is to be good and happy, we may, in a still greater clearness, see the certainty of that which we have so often spoken of at other times, namely, that the inspoken word in Paradise, the bruiser of the serpent, the seed of the woman, the Immanuel, the holy Jesus (for they all mean the same thing), is and was the only possible ground of salvation for fallen man. For if the twofold life is necessary, and man could not be restored to goodness and happiness but by the restored union of this twofold life into its first state, then there was an absolute necessity, in the nature of the thing, that every son of Adam should have such a seed of heaven in the birth of his life, as could, by the mediation of Christ, be raised into a birth and growth of the first perfect man. This is the one original power of salvation, without which no external dispensation could have done any thing towards raising the fallen state of man. For nothing could be raised but what there was to be raised, nor life be given to any thing but to that which was capable of life. Unless, therefore, there had been a seed of life, or a smothered spark of heaven in the soul of man, which wanted to come to the birth, there had been no possibility for any dispensation of God to bring forth a birth of heaven in fallen man.

The faith of the first patriarchs could not have been in being, Moses and the prophets had come in vain, had not the Christ of God laid in a state of hiddenness in every son of man. For faith, which is a will and hunger after God, could not have begun to be, or have any life in man, but because there was something of the divine nature existing and hid in man. For nothing can have any longing desire but after its own likeness, nor could any thing be made to desire God, but that which came from Him, and had the nature of Him.

The whole mediatorial office of Christ, from His birth to His sitting down in power at the right hand of God, was only for this end, to help man to a life that was fallen into death and insensibility in him. And therefore His mediatorial power was to manifest itself by way of a new birth. In the nature of the thing nothing else was to be done, and Christ had no other way to proceed, and that for this plain reason, because life was the thing that was lost, and life, wherever it is, must be raised by a birth, and every

birth must, and can only come from its own seed.

But if Christ was to raise a new life like His own in every man, then every man must have had, originally, in the inmost spirit of his life, a seed of Christ, or Christ, as a seed of heaven, lying there as in a state of insensibility or death, out of which it could not arise but by the mediatorial power of Christ, who, as a second Adam, was to regenerate that birth of His own life which was lost in all the natural sons of Adam the first.

But unless there was this seed of Christ or spark of heaven hidden in the soul, not the least beginning of man's salvation, or of Christ's mediatorial office, could be made. For what could begin to deny self, if there was not something in man different from self? What could begin to have hope and faith and desire of an heavenly life, if there was not something of heaven hidden in his soul, and lying therein as in a state of inactivity and death, till raised by the mediation of Christ into its first perfection of life, and set again in its true dominion over flesh and blood.

Eusebius. — You have, Theophilus, sufficiently proved the certainty and necessity of this matter. But I should be glad if you knew how to help me to some more distinct idea and conception of it.

Theophilus.—An idea is not the thing to be here sought for, it would rather hinder than help your true knowledge of it. But perhaps the following similitude

may be of some use to you.

The ten commandments, when written by God on tables of stone and given to man, did not then first begin to belong to man, they had their existence in man, were born with him, they lay as a seed and power of goodness, hidden in the form and make of his soul, and altogether inseparable from it, before they were shown to man on tables of stone. And when they were shown to man on tables of stone, they were only an outward imitation of that which was inwardly in man, though not legible, because of that impurity of flesh and blood in which they were drowned and swallowed up. For the earthly nature having overcome the divinity that was in man, it gave commandments of its own to man, and required obedience to all the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Hence it became necessary that God should give an outward knowledge of such commandments as were become inwardly unknown, unfelt, and, as it were, shut up in death in the soul.

But now, had not all that is in these commandments been really and antecedently in the soul, as its own birth and nature, had they not still lain therein, and, although totally suppressed, yet in such a seed or remains as could be called forth into their first living state, in vain had the tables of stone been given to man; and all outward writing or teaching of the com-

mandments, had been as useless as so many instructions given to beasts or stones. If therefore you can conceive how all that is good and holy in the commandments, lay hid as an unfelt, inactive power or seed of goodness, till called into sensibility and stirring by laws written on tables of stone: this may help your manner of conceiving and believing how Christ, as a seed of life, or power of salvation, lies in the soul, as its unknown, hidden treasure, till awakened and called forth into life, by the mediatorial office and process of the holy Jesus.

Again, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." Now these two precepts given by the written word of God are an absolute demonstration of the first original perfection of man, and also a full and invincible proof that the same original perfection is not quite annihilated, but lies in him, as an hidden, suppressed seed of goodness, capable of being raised up to its first perfection. For had not this divine unity, purity, and perfection of love towards God and man been man's first natural state of life, it could have nothing to do with his present state. For had any other nature, or measure, or kind of love began in the first birth of his life, he could only have been called to that. For no creature has, or can have, a call to be above, or act above, its own nature. Therefore, as sure as man is called to

this unity, purity, and perfection of love, so sure is it that it was at first his natural, heavenly state, and still has its seed or remains within him, as his only power and possibility of rising up to it again. And therefore, all that man is called to, every degree of a new and perfect life, every future exaltation and glory he is to have from the mediation of Christ, is a full proof that the same perfection was originally his natural state, and is still in him in such a seed or remains of existence, as to admit of a perfect renewal.

And thus it is that you are to conceive of the holy Jesus, or the WORD of God, as the hidden treasure of every human soul, born as a seed of the WORD, in the birth of the soul immured under flesh and blood, till as a day-star it arises in our hearts, and changes the son of an earthly Adam into a son of God.

And was not the WORD and SPIRIT of God in us all, antecedent to any dispensation or written word of God, as a real seed of life in the birth of our own life, we could have no more fitness for the gospel redemption, than the animals of this world, which have nothing of heaven in them. And to call us to love God with all our hearts, to put on Christ, to walk according to the Spirit, if these things had not their real nature and root within us, would be as vain and useless, as to make rules and orders how our eyes should smell and taste, or our ears should see.

Now this mystery of an inward life

hidden in man, as his most precious treasure, as the ground of all that can be great or good in him, and hidden only since his fall, and which only can be opened and brought forth in its first glory by Him to whom all power in heaven and on earth is given, is a truth to which almost every thing in nature bears full witness. Look where you will, nothing appears or works outwardly in any creature, or in any effect of nature, but what is all done from its own inward invisible spirit, not a spirit brought into it, but its own inward spirit, which is an inward invisible mystery, till made known, or brought forth by outward appearances.

The sea neither is nor can be moved and tossed by any other wind than that which has its birth, and life, and strength in and from the sea itself, as its own wind. The sun in the firmament gives growth to every thing that grows in the earth, and life to every thing that lives upon it, not by giving or imparting a life from without, but only by stirring up in every thing its own growth and its own life, which lay as in a seed or state of death, till helped to come out of it by the sun, which, as an emblem of the Redeemer of the spiritual world, helps every earthly thing out of its own death, into its own highest state of life.

That which we call our sensations, as seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, are not things brought into us from without, or given unto us by any external causes, but are only so many

inborn, secret states of the soul, which lie in their state of hiddenness, till they are occasionally awakened and brought forth into sensibility by outward occurrences. And were they not antecedently in the soul, as states and forms of its own life, no outward objects could bring the soul into a sensibility of them. For nothing can have or be in any state of sensation but that which it is, and hath from itself, as its own birth. This is as certain, as that a circle hath only its own roundness.

The stinking gum gives nothing to the soul, nor brings any thing into sensibility, but that which was before in the soul, it has only a fitness to awaken and stir up that state of the soul, which lay dormant before, and which, when brought into sensibility, is called the sensation of bad smelling. And the odoriferous gum hath likewise but the same power, viz. a fitness to stir up that state of sensation in the soul, which is called its delightful smelling. But both these sensations are only internal states of the soul, which appear, or disappear, are found, or not found, just as occasions bring them into sensibility.

Again, the greatest artist in music can add no sound to his instrument, nor make it give forth any other melody, but that which lieth silently hidden in

it, as its own inward state.

Look now at what you will, whether it be animate or inanimate, all that it is, or has, or can be, it is and has in and from itself, as its own inward state; and all outward things can do no more to it than the hand does to the instrument, make it show forth its own inward state, either of harmony or discord.

It is strictly thus with ourselves. Not a spark of joy, of wrath, of envy, of love, or grief, can possibly enter into us from without, or be caused to be in us by any outward thing. This is as impossible, as for the sound of metals to be put into a lump of clay. And as no metal can possibly give forth any other or higher sound than that which is enclosed within it, so we, however struck, can give forth no other or higher sound, either of loss, hatred, wrath, etc., than that very degree which lay before shut up within us.

The natural state of our tempers has variety of covers, under which they lie concealed at times, both from ourselves and others; but when this or that accident happens to displace such or such a cover, then that which lay hid under it breaks forth. And then we vainly think that this or that outward occasion has not shown us how we are within, but has only infused or put into us a wrath, or grief, or envy, which is not our natural state, or of our own growth, or has all that it has from our own inward state.

But this is mere blindness and selfdeceit, for it is as impossible for the mind to have any grief, or wrath, or joy, but what it has all from its own inward state, as for the instrument to give forth any other harmony or discord but that which is within and from itself. Persons, things, and outward occurrences may strike our instrument improperly and variously, but as we are in ourselves, such is our outward sound, whatever strikes us.

If our inward state is the renewed life of Christ within us, then every thing and occasion, let it be what it will, only makes the same life to sound forth and show itself; then if one cheek is smitten, we meekly turn the other also. But if nature is alive, and only under a religious cover, then every outward accident that shakes or disturbs this cover gives leave to that bad state, whether of grief, or wrath, or joy, that lay hid within us, to show forth itself.

But nothing at any time makes the least show or sound outwardly, but only that which lay ready within us for an outward birth, as occasion should offer.

What a miserable mistake is it therefore to place religious goodness in outward observances, in notions and opinions which good and bad men can equally receive and practise, and to treat the ready real power and operation of an inward life of God in the birth of our souls as fanaticism and enthusiasm; when not only the whole letter and spirit of Scripture, but every operation in nature and creature demonstrates that the kingdom of heaven must be all within us, or it never can possibly belong to us. Goodness, piety, and holiness can only be ours, as thinking, willing, and desiring are ours, by being

in us, as a power of heaven in the birth and growth of our own life.

And now, Eusebius, how is the great controversy about religion and salvation shortened.

For since the one only work of Christ as your Redeemer is only this, to take from the earthly life of flesh and blood its usurped power, and to raise the smothered spark of heaven out of its state of death into a powerful governing life of the whole man, your one only work also, under your Redeemer, is fully known. And you have the utmost certainty what you are to do, where you are to seek, and in what you are to find your salvation. All that you have to do, or can do, is to oppose, resist, and as far as you can to renounce the evil tempers and workings of your own earthly nature. You are under the power of no other enemy, are held in no other captivity, and want no other deliverance, but from the power of your own earthly self. This is the one murderer of the divine life within you. It is your own Cain that murders your own Abel. Now every thing that your earthly nature does is under the influence of self-will, selflove, and self-seeking, whether it carries you to laudable or blameable practices, all is done in the nature and spirit of Cain, and only helps you to such goodness, as when Cain slew his brother. For every action and motion of self has the spirit of antichrist, and murders the divine life within you.

Judge not therefore of yourself by

considering how many of those things you do which divines and moralists call virtue and goodness, nor how much you abstain from those things which they call sin and vice.

But daily and hourly, in every step that you take, see to the spirit that is within you, whether it be heaven or earth that guides you. And judge every thing to be sin and Satan, in which your earthly nature, own love, or self-seeking has any share of life in you; nor think that any goodness is brought to life in you, but so far as it is an actual death to the pride, the vanity, the wrath, and selfish tempers of your fallen, earthly life.

Again, here you see where and how you are to seek your salvation, not in taking up your travelling staff, or crossing the seas to find out a new Luther or a new Calvin, to clothe yourself with their opinions. No. The oracle is at home that always and only speaks the truth to you, because nothing is your truth but that good and that evil which is yours within you. For salvation or damnation is no outward thing, that is brought into you from without, but is only that which springs up within you as the birth and state of your own life. What you are in yourself, what is doing in yourself, is all that can be either your salvation or damnation.

For all that is our good, and all that is our bad, has no place nor power but within us. Again, nothing that we do is bad, but for this reason, because it resists the power and working of God within us; and nothing that we do can be good but because it conforms to the Spirit of God within us. And therefore, as all that can be good and all that can be evil in us necessarily supposes a God working within us, you have the utmost certainty that God, salvation, and the kingdom of heaven are nowhere to be sought or found but within you, and that all outward religion, from the fall of man to this day, is not for itself, but merely for the sake of an inward and divine life, which was lost when Adam died his first death in Paradise. And therefore it may well be said that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing," because nothing is wanted, and therefore nothing can be available, but the new creature called out of its captivity, under the death and darkness of flesh and blood, into the light, life, and perfection of its first creation.

And thus also you have the fullest proof in what your salvation precisely consists. Not in any historic faith, or knowledge of any thing absent or distant from you, not in any variety of restraints, rules, and methods of practising virtues, not in any formality of opinion about faith and works, repentance, forgiveness of sins, or justification and sanctification, not in any truth or righteousness that you can have from yourself, from the best of men or books, but wholly and solely in the life of God, or Christ of God, quickened, and born

again in you, or, in other words, in the restoration and perfect union of the first twofold life in the humanity.

Theogenes. - Though all that has passed betwixt you and Eusebius concerns matters of the greatest moment, yet I must call it a digression, and quite useless to me. For I have not the least doubt about any of these things you have been asserting. It is visible enough that there can be no medium in this matter, either religion must be all spiritual, or all carnal; that is, we must either take up with the grossness of the Sadducees, who say there is neither angel nor spirit, or with such purification as the Pharisees had from their washing of pots and vessels, and tithing their mint and rue; we must, I say, either acquiesce in all this carnality, or we must profess a religion that is all spirit and life, and merely for the sake of raising up an inward spiritual life of heaven, that fell into death in our first father.

I consent also to every thing that you have said of the nature and origin of wrath. That it can have no place, nor possibility of beginning, but solely in the creaturely nature, nor even any possibility of beginning there, till the creature has died to, or lost, its proper state of existence in God; that is, till it has lost that life, and blessing, and happiness which it had in and from God at its first creation.

But I still ask, What must I do with all those scriptures which not only make God capable of being provoked to wrath and resentment, but frequently inflamed, with the highest degree of rage, fury, and vengeance, that can be expressed by words?

Theophilus.—I promised, you know, to remove this difficulty, and will be as good as my word. But I must first tell you that you are in much more distress about it than you need to be. For in the little Book of Regeneration, in the Appeal, in the Spirit of Prayer, etc., which you have read with such entire approbation, the whole matter is cleared up from its true ground, how wrath in the Scriptures is ascribed to God, and yet cannot belong to the nature of the Deity.

Thus you are told in the Appeal, after these two falls of two orders of creatures (that is, of angels and man), the Deity itself came to have new and strange names new and unheard of tempers and inclinations of wrath. fury, and vengeance ascribed to it. I call them new, because they began at the fall; I call them strange, because they were foreign to the Deity, and could not belong to God in Himself. Thus, God is said to be a consuming fire. But to whom? To the fallen angels and lost souls. But why and how is He so to them? It is because those creatures have lost all that they had from God, but the fire of their nature, and therefore God can only be found and manifested in them, as a consuming

fire. Now, is it not justly said that God, who is nothing but infinite love, is vet in such creatures only a consuming fire? And though God be nothing but love, yet they are under the wrath and vengeance of God, because they have only that fire in them, which is broken off from the light and love of God. and so can know or feel nothing of God but His fire of nature in them? As creatures, they can have no life, but what they have in and from God; and therefore that wrathful life which they have is truly said to be a wrath or fire of God upon them. And yet it is still strictly true, that there is no wrath in God Himself, that He is not changed in His temper towards the creatures. that He does not cease to be one and the same infinite fountain of goodness, infinitely flowing forth in the riches of His love upon all and every life. (Now, sir, mind what follows, as the true ground how wrath can and cannot be ascribed to God.) God is not changed from love to wrath, but the creatures have changed their own state in nature, and so the God of nature can only be manifested in them, according to their own state in nature. And, N.B., this is the true ground of rightly understanding all that is said of the wrath and vengeance of God in and upon the creatures. It is only in such a sense as the curse of God may be said to be upon

them, not because any thing cursed can be in or come from God, but because they have made that life, which they must have in God, to be a mere curse to themselves. For every creature that lives must have its life in, and from God, and therefore God must be in every creature. This is as true of devils as of holy angels. But how is God in them? N.B. - Why, only as He is manifested in nature. Holy angels have the triune life of God, as manifested in nature, so manifested also in them, and therefore God is in them all love, goodness, majesty, and glory, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Devils have nothing of this triune life left in them but the fire or wrath of eternal nature broken off from all light and love; and therefore the life that they can have in and from God is only and solely a life of wrath, rage, and darkness, and theirs is the kingdom of hell.

And because this life (though all rage and darkness) is a strength and power of life, which they must have in and from God, and which they cannot take out of His hands, therefore is their cursed, miserable, wrathful life truly and justly said to be the curse, and misery, and wrath, and vengeance of God upon them, though God Himself can no more have curse, misery, wrath, and vengeance, than He can have mischief,

malice, or any fearful tremblings in His holy triune Deity.\*

See now, Theogenes, what little occasion you had for your present difficulty. For here, in the above cited words, which you have been several years acquainted with, the true ground and reason is plainly shown you, how and why all the wrath, rage, and curse that is anywhere stirring in nature, or breaking forth in any creature, is and must be in all truth called by the Scriptures the wrath, and rage, and vengeance of God, though it be the greatest of all impossibilities for rage and wrath to be in the holy Deity itself.

The Scriptures therefore are literally true in all that they affirm of the wrath, etc., of God. For is it not as literally true of God that hell and devils are His, as that heaven and holy angels are His? Must not therefore all the wrath and rage of the one be as truly His rage and wrath burning in them, as the light, and joy, and glory of the other is only His goodness opened and manifested in them, according to their state in nature?

Take notice of this fundamental truth.

Every thing that works in nature and creature, except sin, is the working of God in nature and creature. The creature has nothing else in its power but the free use of its will; and its free will hath no other power but that of concurring with, or resisting, the working of God in nature. The creature with its free will can bring nothing into being,

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Appeal to All that Doubt," etc., p. 153.

nor make any alteration in the working of nature, it can only change its own state or place in the working of nature; and so feel and find something in its state that it did not feel or find before.

Thus God, in the manifestation of Himself in and by nature, sets before every man fire and water, life and death; and man has no other power but that of entering into and uniting with either of these states, but not the least power of adding to or taking any thing from them, or of making them to be otherwise than he finds them.

For this fire and water, this life and death, are nature, and have their unchangeable state in the uniform working of God in nature. And therefore, whatever is done by this fire and water, this life and death, in any creature, may, nay, must in the strictest truth be affirmed of God, as done by Him. And consequently every breathing forth of fire, or death, or rage, or curse, wherever it is, or in whatever creature, must be said, in the language of Scripture, to be a provoked wrath, or fiery vengeance of God, poured forth upon the creature. And yet, every thing that has been said in proof of this wrath of God shows and proves to you at the same time that it is not a wrath in the holy Deity itself.

For you see, as was said above, that God sets before man fire and water, life and death; now these things are not God, nor existent in the Deity itself; but they are that which is and is called nature, and as they are the only things set before man, so man can go no farther, reach no farther, nor find, nor feel, nor be sensible of any thing else, but that which is to be felt or found in this nature, or fire and water, life and death, which is set before him. And therefore all that man can find or feel of the wrath and vengeance of God can only be in this fire and this death, and not in the Deity itself.

Theogenes.—Oh, Theophilus, you have given me the utmost satisfaction on this point, and in a much better way than I imagined. I expected to have seen you glossing and criticising away the literal expression of scriptures that affirm the wrath of God, in order to make good your point that the Deity is mere love.

But you have done the utmost justice to the letter of Scripture, you have established it upon a firm and solid foundation, and shown that the truth of things require it to be so, and that there can be no wrath anywhere, but what is and must be called the wrath and vengeance of God, and yet is only in nature.

What you have here said seems as if it would clear up many passages of Scripture that have raised much perplexity. Methinks I begin to see how the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, how eyes that see not and ears that hear not, may in the strictest truth be said to be of or from God, though the Deity in itself stands in the utmost con-

trariety to all these things, and in the utmost impossibility of willing or causing them to be.

But I must not draw you from our present matter. You have shown, from the letter of Scripture, that nothing else is set before man but fire and water, life and death; and, therefore, no possibility of wrath or love, joy or sorrow, curse or happiness, to be found by man, but in this state of nature, set before him, or into which, at his creation, he is introduced, as into a region of various sensibilities, where all that he finds or feels is truly God's, but not God Himself, who has His supernatural residence above, and distinct from every thing that is nature, fire or water, life or death.

But give me leave to mention one word of a difficulty that I yet have: you have proved that wrath, rage, vengeance, etc., can only exist or be found in nature, and not in God; and yet you say that nature is nothing else but a manifestation of the hidden invisible powers of God. But if so, must not that which is in nature be also in God? How else could nature be a manifestation of God?

Theophilus.—Nature is a true manifestation of the hidden, invisible God. But you are to observe that nature, as it is in itself, in its own state, cannot have the least possible spark or stirring of wrath, or curse, or vengeance in it; but, on the contrary, is from eternity to eternity a mere infinity of heavenly light, love, joy, and glory; and thus it is a true manifestation of the hidden Deity,

and the greatest of proofs that the Deity itself can have no wrath in it, since wrath only then begins to be in nature, when nature has lost its first state.

Theogenes.—This is answer enough. But now another thing starts up in my mind. For if the Deity in itself, in its supernatural state, is mere love, and only a will to all goodness, and if nature in itself is only a manifestation of this Deity of love, in heavenly light and glory, if neither God nor nature have, or can give forth wrath, how then can fire and water, life and death, be set before man? What can they come from, or where can they exist, since God in Himself is all love; and nature, which is the kingdom of heaven, is an infinity of joy, blessing, and happiness.

Theophilus.—I will open to you all this matter to the bottom in as few words as

I can.

Before God began any creation, or gave birth to any creature, He was only manifested or known to Himself in His own glory and majesty; there was nothing but Himself beholding Himself in His own kingdom of heaven, which was, and is, and ever will be, as unlimited as Himself.

Nature, as well as God, is, and must be, antecedent to all creature. For as no seeing eye could be created, unless there was, antecedently to it, a natural visibility of things, so no creature could come into a sensibility of any natural life, unless such a state of nature was antecedent to it. For no creature can begin to be in any world, or state of nature, but by being created out of that world, or state of nature, into which it is brought to have its life. For to live in any world is the same thing as for a creature to have all that it is and has in and from that world. And therefore no creature can come into any other kind of existence and life, but such as can be had out of that world in which it is to live. Neither can there possibly be any other difference between created beings, whether animate or inanimate, but what arises from that out of which they were created. Seeing, then, that before the existence of the first creatures there was nothing but God and His kingdom of heaven, the first creatures could receive no other life but that which was in God. because there was nothing living but God, nor any other life but His, nor could they exist in any other place or outward state but the kingdom of heaven, because there was none else in existence; and therefore the first-creatures must, of all necessity, be divine and heavenly, both in their inward life and outward state.

Theogenes.—Here, then, Theophilus, comes my question. Where is that fire and water, that life and death, that is set before the creature? For, as to these first creatures, nothing is set before them, nothing is within them or without them, but God and the kingdom of heaven.

Theophilus.—You should not have said, there is nothing within them but God and the kingdom of heaven. For that which is their own creaturely nature within them, is not God, nor the kingdom of heaven.

It has been already proved, to your satisfaction, that no creature can be divine, good, and happy but by having a twofold life united in it. And in this twofold life of the creature is fire and water, life and death, unavoidably set before it. For as its will worketh with either of these lives, so will it find either fire or water, life or death. If its will turneth from the life of God into the creaturely life, then it enters into a sensibility of that which is meant by death and fire, viz. a wrathful misery. But if the will keeps steadily given up to the Deity, then it lives in possession of that life and water which was its first, and will be its everlasting, heavenly joy and happiness.

But to explain this matter something deeper to you, according to the mystery of all things opened by God in His chosen instrument, Jacob Behmen.

You know we have often spoken of eternal nature, that so sure as there is an eternal God, so sure is it that there is an eternal nature, as universal, as unlimited as God Himself, and everywhere working where God is, and therefore, everywhere equally existent, as being His kingdom of heaven, or outward manifestation of the invisible riches, powers, and glories of the Deity.

Before, or without nature, the Deity is an entire hidden, shut up, unknown, and unknowable abyss. For nature is the only ground or beginning of something: there is neither this nor that, no ground for conception, no possibility of distinction or difference; there cannot be a creature to think, nor any thing to be thought upon, till nature is in existence. For all the properties of sensibility and sensible life, every mode and manner of existence, all seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, all inclinations, passions, and sensations of joy, sorrow, pain, pleasure, etc., are not in God, but in nature. And therefore, God is not knowable, not a thought can begin about Him, till He manifests Himself in, and through, and by the existence of nature; that is, till there is something that can be seen, understood, distinguished, felt, etc.

And this is eternal nature, or the outbirth of the Deity, called the kingdom of heaven, viz. an infinity, or boundless opening of the properties, powers, wonders, and glories of the hidden Deity, and this not once done, but ever doing, ever standing in the same birth, for ever and ever breaking forth and springing up in new forms and openings of the abyssal Deity, in the powers of nature. And out of this ocean of manifested powers of nature, the will of the Deity, created hosts of heavenly beings, full of the heavenly wonders introduced into a participation of the infinity of God, to live in an eternal succession of heavenly sensations, to see and feel, to taste and find new forms of delight in an inexhaustible source of

ever-changing and never-ceasing wonders

of the divine glory.

Oh, Theogenes! What an eternity is this, out of which and for which thy eternal soul was created! What little crawling things are all that an earthly ambition can set before thee! Bear with patience for a while the rags of thy earthly nature, the veil and darkness of flesh and blood, as the lot of thy inheritance from father Adam, but think nothing worth a thought but that which will bring thee back to thy first glory, and land thee safe in the region of eternity.

But to return. Nothing is before this eternal nature, but the holy, supernatural Deity; and every thing that is after it is creature, and has all its creaturely life and state in it and from it, either medi-

ately or immediately.

This eternal nature hath seven chief or fountain properties, that are the doers or workers of every thing that is done in it, and can have neither more nor less, because it is a birth from, or a manifestation of, the Deity in nature. For the perfection of nature (as was before said of every divine and happy creature) is an union of two things, or is a twofold state. It is nature, and it is God manifested in nature. Now God is triune, and nature is triune, and hence there arises the ground of properties, three and three; and that which brings those three and three into union, or manifests the triune God in the triune nature, is another property; so that the glorious manifestation of the Deity in

nature can have neither more nor less than seven chief or fountain properties, from which every thing that is known, found, and felt in all the universe of nature, in all the variety of creatures either in heaven or on earth, hath its only rise or cause either mediately or immediately.

Theogenes.—You say, Theophilus, that the triune Deity is united or manifested in triune nature, and that thence comes the glorious manifestation of God in seven heavenly properties, called the kingdom of heaven. But how does it appear that this nature, antecedently to the entrance of the Deity into it, is triune? Or what is this triune nature, before God is supposed to be in union with it?

Theophilus.—It is barely a DESIRE. It neither is, nor has, nor can be any thing else but a desire. For desire is the only thing in which the Deity can work and manifest itself; for God can only come into that which wants and desires Him.

The Deity is an infinite plenitude, or fulness of riches and powers, in and from itself; and it is only WANT and DESIRE that is excluded from it, and can have no existence in it. And here lies the true immutable distinction between God and nature, and shows why neither can ever be changed into the other; it is, because God is an UNIVERSAL ALL; and nature, or desire, is an UNIVERSAL WANT, viz. to be filled with God.

Now, as nature can be nothing but a desire, so nothing is in or done in any

natural way, but as desire does it; because desire is the all of nature. And therefore, there is no strength or substance, no power or motion, no cause or effect in nature, but what is in itself a desire, or the working and effect of it.

This is the true origin of attraction and all its powers in this material world. It gives essence and substance to all that is matter, and the properties of matter, it holds every element in its created state; and not only earth and stones, but light, and air, and motion are under its dominion. From the centre to the circumference of this material system, every motion, separation, union, vegetation, or corruption begins no sooner, goes on no farther, than as attraction works.

Take away attraction from this material system, and then it has all the annihilation it can ever possibly have.

Whence now has attraction this nature? It is solely from hence; because all nature, from its eternity, hath been, is, and for ever can be, only a DESIRE, and hath nothing in it but the properties of desire.

Now the essential, inseparable properties of DESIRE are three, and can be neither more nor less; and in this you have that tri-unity of nature which you asked after, and in which the triune Deity manifesteth itself. I shall not now prove these three properties of the desire, because I have done it at large, and plainly enough elsewhere.\*

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Way to Divine Knowledge," p. 200, to the end. "Spirit of Prayer," App. p. 121, to the end.

But, to go back now to your question—Where or how this fire and water, etc., can be found, since God is all love and goodness, and His manifestation in nature is a mere kingdom of heaven. They are to be found in the twofold state of heaven, and the twofold state of every heavenly creature.

For seeing that the perfection of nature, and the perfection of the intelligent creature, consists in one and the same two-fold state, you have here the plainest ground and reason why and how every good, and happy, and new created being must, of all necessity, have fire and water, life and death, set before it, or put into its choice.

Because it has it in its power to turn and give up its will to either of these lives, it can turn either to God or nature, and therefore must have life and death, fire or water, in its choice.

Now this twofold life, which makes the perfection of nature and creature, is, in other words, signified by the seven heavenly properties of nature: for when God is manifested in nature, all its seven properties are in an heavenly state.

But in these seven properties, though all heavenly, lieth the ground of fire and water, etc., because a division or separation can be made in them by the will of the creature. For the three first properties are as distinct from the four following ones, as God is distinct from that which wants God. And these three first properties are the essence or whole being of that desire which is,

and is called nature, or that which wants God.

When, therefore, the will of the creature turns from God unto nature, it breaks or loses the union of the seven heavenly properties; because nature, as distinct from God, has only the three first properties in it. And such a creature, having broke or lost the union of the seven properties, is fallen into the three first, which is meant by fire and death. For when the three first properties have lost God, or their union with the four following ones, then they are mere nature, which, in its whole being, is nothing else but the strength and rage of hunger, an excess of want, of selftorment, and self-vexation. Surely now, my friend, this matter is enough explained.

Theogenes.—Indeed, Theophilus, I am quite satisfied; for by this account which you have given of the ground of nature, and its true and full distinction from God, you have struck a most amazing light into

my mind.

For if nature is mere want, and has nothing in it but a strength of want, generated from the three self-tormenting properties of a desire; if God is all love, joy, and happiness, an infinite plenitude of all blessings, then the limits and bounds of good and evil, of happiness and misery, are made as visibly distinct, and as certainly to be known, as the difference between a circle and a straight line.

To live to desire, that is, to nature, is unavoidably entering into the region of

all evil and misery; because nature has nothing else in it; but, on the other hand, to die to desire, that is, to turn from nature to God, is to be united with the infinite source of all that is good, and blessed, and happy.

All that I wanted to know is now cleared up in the greatest plainness. And I have no difficulty about those passages of Scripture which speak of the wrath, and fury, and vengeance of God. Wrath is His, just as all nature is His, and yet God is mere love, that only rules and governs wrath, as He governs the foaming waves of the sea and the madness of storms and tempests.

The following propositions are as evidently true as that two and two are four.

First, That God, in His holy Deity, is as absolutely free from wrath and rage, and as utterly incapable of them, as He is of thickness, hardness, and darkness; because wrath and rage belong to nothing else, can exist in nothing else, have life in nothing else, but in thickness, hardness, and darkness.

Secondly, That all wrath is disorder, and can be nowhere but in nature and creature, because nothing else is capable of changing from right to wrong.

Thirdly, That wrath can have no existence even in nature and creature, till they have lost their first perfection, which they had from God, and are become that which they should not have been.

Fourthly, That all the wrath, and

fury, and vengeance that ever did or can break forth in nature and creature, is, according to the strictest truth, to be called and looked upon as the wrath and vengeance of God, just as the darkness, as well as the light, is and is to be called His.

Oh, Theophilus, what a key have you given me to the right understanding of Scripture!

For when nature and creature are known to be the only theatre of evil and disorder, and the holy Deity, as that governing love, which wills nothing but the removal of all evil from every thing, as fast as infinite wisdom can find ways of doing it; then whether you read of the raining of fire and brimstone, or only showers of heavenly manna falling upon the earth, it is only one and the same love working in such different ways and diversity of instruments, as time, and place, and occasion had made wise, and good, and beneficial.

Pharaoh with his hardened heart, and St. Paul with his voice from heaven, though so contrary to one another, were both of them the chosen vessels of the same God of love, because both miraculously taken out of their own state, and made to do all the good to a blind and wicked world which they were capable of doing.

And thus, sir, are all the treasures of the wisdom and goodness of God, hidden in the letter of Scripture, made the comfort and delight of my soul, and every thing I read turns itself into a motive of loving and adoring the wonderful working of the love of God over all the various changings of nature and creature, till all evil shall be extinguished, and all disorder go back again to its first harmonious state of perfection.

Depart from this idea of God, as an infinity of mere love, wisdom, and goodness, and then every thing in the system of Scripture and the system of nature only helps the reasoning mind to be miserably perplexed, as well with the mercies as with the judgments of God.

But when God is known to be omnipotent love, that can do nothing but works of love, and that all nature and creature are only under the operation of love, as a distempered person under the care of a kind and skilful physician, who seeks nothing but the perfect recovery of his patient; then, whatever is done, whether a severe caustic or a pleasant cordial is ordered; that is, whether, because of its difference, it may have the different name of mercy or judgment, yet all is equally well done, because love is the only doer of both, and does both, from the same principle and for the same end.

Theophilus.—Oh, Theogenes, now you are according to your name, you are born of God. For when love is the triune God, that you serve, worship, and adore, the only God, in whom you desire to live and move and have your being, then of a truth God dwelleth in you, and you in God.

I shall now only add this one word

more, to strengthen and confirm your right understanding of all that is said of the wrath or rage of God in the Scriptures.

The Psalmist, you know, saith thus of God, "He giveth forth His ice like morsels, and who is able to abide His frosts?" Now, sir, if you know how to explain this scripture, and can show how ice and frost can truly be ascribed to God as His, though absolutely impossible to have any existence in Him, then you have an easy and unerring key how the wrath, and fury, and vengeance that anywhere falls upon any creature, is and may be truly ascribed to God as His, though fury and vengeance are as inconsistent with and as impossible to have any existence in the Deity, as lumps of ice, or the hardness of intolerable frosts.

Now in this text, setting forth the horror of God's ice and frost, you have the whole nature of divine wrath set before you. Search all the Scriptures, and you will nowhere find any wrath of God, but what is bounded in nature, and is so described as to be itself a proof that it has no existence in the holy supernatural Deity.

Thus says the Psalmist again, "The earth trembled and quaked, the very foundations also of the hills shook, and were removed, because He was wroth." No wrath here but in the elements.

Again, "There went a smoke out in His presence, and a consuming fire out of His mouth, so that coals were kindled at it. The springs of water were seen, and the foundations of the round world were discovered at Thy chiding, O Lord, at the blasting of the breath of Thy displeasure."

Now every working of the wrath of God described in Scripture is strictly of a piece with this, it relates to a wrath solely confined to the powers and working properties of nature, that lives and moves only in the elements of the fallen world, and no more reaches the Deity than ice and frost do.

The apostle saith, "Avenge not yourselves, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

This is another full proof that wrath or vengeance is not in the holy Deity itself, as a quality of the divine mind; for if it was, then vengeance would belong to every child of God that was truly born of Him, or He could not have the spirit of His Father, or be perfect, as His Father in heaven is perfect.

But if vengeance only belongs to God, and can only be so affirmed of Him, as ice and frost are His, and belong to Him; if it has no other manner of working, than as when it is said, "He sent out His arrows and scattered them, He cast forth lightnings and destroyed them;" then it is certain that the divine vengeance is only in fallen nature and its disordered properties, and is no more in the Deity itself than hailstones and coals of fire.

And here you have the true reason, why revenge or vengeance is not allowed to man, it is because vengeance can

only work in the evil or disordered properties of fallen nature. But man being himself a part of fallen nature, and subject to its disordered properties, is not allowed to work with them, because it would be stirring up evil in himself, and that is his sin of wrath, or revenge.

God therefore reserves all vengeance to Himself, not because wrathful revenge is a temper or quality that can have any place in the holy Deity; but because the holy supernatural Deity, being free from all the properties of nature, whence partial love and hatred spring, and being in Himself nothing but an infinity of love, wisdom, and goodness, He alone knows how to overrule the disorders of nature, and so to repay evil with evil, that the highest good may be promoted by it.

To say, therefore, that vengeance is to be reserved to God, is only saying, in other words, that all the evils in nature are to be reserved, and turned over to the love of God, to be healed by His goodness. And every act of what is called divine vengeance recorded in Scripture may, and ought with the greatest strictness of truth, be called an act of the divine love.

If Sodom flames and smokes with stinking brimstone, it is the love of God that kindled it, only to extinguish a more horrible fire. It was one and the same infinite love, when it preserved Noah in the ark, when it turned Sodom into a burning lake, and overwhelmed

Pharaoh in the Red Sea. And if God commanded the waters to destroy the old world, it was as high an act of the same infinite love towards that chaos, as when it said to the first darkness upon the face of the deep, "Let there be light, and there was light."

Not a word in all Scripture concerning the wrath or vengeance of God, but directly teaches you these two infallible truths. First, that all the wrath spoken of worketh nowhere but in the wrathful, disordered elements and properties of fallen nature. Secondly, That all the power that God exercises over them, all that He doth at any time, or on any occasion, with or by them, is only and solely the one work of His unchangeable love toward man.

Just as the good physician acts from only one and the same good will towards his patient, when he orders bitter and sour, as when he gives the pleasant draughts.

Now, suppose the good physician to have such intense love for you as to disregard your aversion towards them, and to force such medicines down your throat as can alone save your life; suppose he should therefore call himself your severe physician, and declare himself so rigid towards you that he would not spare you nor suffer you, go where you would, to escape his bitter draughts, till all means of your recovery were tried, then you would have a true and just, though low, representation of those bitter cups which God

in His wrath forceth fallen man to

Now, as the bitter, sour, hot, etc., in the physician's draughts are not declarations of any the like bitterness, heat, or sourness in the spirit of the physician that uses them; but are things quite distinct from the state and spirit of his mind, and only manifest his care and skill in the right use of such materials towards the health of his patient.

So, in like manner, all the elements of fallen nature are only so many outward materials in the hands of God, formed and mixed into heat and cold, into fruitful and pestilential effects, into serenity of seasons and blasting tempests, into means of health and sickness, of plenty and poverty, just as the wisdom and goodness of providence sees to be fittest to deliver man from the miserable malady of his earthly nature, and help him to become heavenly minded.

If, therefore, it would be great folly to suppose bitterness, or heat, etc., to be in the spirit of the physician, when he gives a hot or bitter medicine, much greater folly surely must it be to suppose that wrath, vengeance, or any pestilential quality is in the spirit of the holy Deity, when a wrath, a vengeance, or pestilence is stirred up in the fallen elements, by the providence of God, as a proper remedy for the evil of this or that time or occasion.

Hear these decisive words of Scripture, viz. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." What a grossness, therefore, of

mistake is it, to conclude that wrath must be in the Deity, because He chastens and threatens chastisement, when you have God's own word for it that nothing but His love chasteneth? Again, "Thus saith the Lord, I have smitten you with blasting and mildew. Your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-yards did the palmer-worm devour;" and then the love that did this makes this complaint, "Yet ye have not returned to Me." Again, "Pestilence have I sent amongst you; I have made the stink of your tents to come up even into your nostrils," etc. And then the same love that did this, that made this use of the disordered elements, makes the same complaint again, "Yet have ye not returned to Me." \*

Now, sir, how is it possible for words to give stronger proof that God is mere love, that He has no will towards fallen man but to bless him with works of love. and this as certainly, when He turns the air into a pestilence, as when He makes the same air rain down manna upon the earth. Since neither the one nor the other are done, but as time, and place, and occasion render them the fittest means to make man return and adhere to God, that is, to come out of all the evil and misery of his fallen state. What can infinite love do more, or what can it do to give greater proof that all that it does proceeds from love? And here you are to observe that this is not said from human conjecture, or

<sup>\*</sup> Amos iv. 9.

any imaginary idea of God, but is openly asserted, constantly affirmed, and repeated in the plainest letter of Scripture. But this conversation has been long enough. And I hope we shall meet again to-morrow.

## THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

## Eusebius.

THERE is no occasion to resume any thing of our yesterday's discourse. The following propositions are sufficiently

proved.

First, That God is an abyssal infinity of love, wisdom, and goodness, that He ever was, and ever will be, one and the same unchangeable will to all goodness and works of love, as incapable of any sensibility of wrath, or acting under it, as of falling into pain or darkness, and acting under their direction.

Secondly, That all wrath, strife, discord, hatred, envy, or pride, etc., all heat and cold, all enmity in the elements, all thickness, grossness, and darkness, are things that have no existence but in and

from the sphere of fallen nature.

Thirdly, That all the evils of contrariety and disorder in fallen nature are only as so many materials in the hands of infinite love and wisdom, all made to work in their different ways, as far as is possible, to one and the same end, viz. to turn temporal evil into eternal good.

So that whether you look at light or darkness, at night or day, at fire or water, at heaven or earth, at life or death, at prosperity or adversity, at blasting winds or heavenly dews, at sickness or health, you see nothing but such a state of things, in and through which the supernatural Deity wills and seeks the restoration of fallen nature and creature to their first perfection.

It now only remains that the doctrine of Scripture concerning the atonement, necessary to be made by the life, sufferings, and death of Christ, be explained, or in other words, the true meaning of that righteousness or justice of God, that must have satisfaction done to it before man can be reconciled to God.

For this doctrine is thought by some to favour the opinion of a wrath and resentment in the Deity itself.

Theophilus.—This doctrine, Eusebius, of the atonement made by Christ, and the absolute necessity and real efficacy of it to satisfy the righteousness or justice of God, is the very ground and foundation of Christian redemption, and the life and strength of every part of it. But then, this very doctrine is so far from favouring the opinion of a wrath in the Deity itself, that it is an absolute full denial of it, and the strongest of demonstrations that the wrath or resentment that is to be pacified or atoned cannot possibly be in the Deity itself.

For this wrath, that is to be atoned and pacified, is, in its whole nature, nothing else but sin, or disorder in the creature. And when sin is extinguished in the creature, all the wrath that is between God and the creature is fully atoned. Search all the Bible, from one end to the other, and you will find that the atonement of that which is called the divine wrath or justice, and the extinguishing of sin in the creature, are only different expressions for one and the same individual thing. And therefore, unless you will place sin in God, that wrath that is to be atoned or pacified cannot be placed in Him.

The whole nature of our redemption has no other end but to remove or extinguish the wrath that is between God and man. When this is removed, man is reconciled to God. Therefore, where the wrath is, or where that is which wants to be atoned, there is that which is the blameable cause of the separation between God and man: there is that which Christ came into the world to extinguish, to quench, or atone. If, therefore, this wrath, which is blameable cause of the separation between God and man, is in God Himself, if Christ died to atone, or extinguish a wrath that was got into the holy Deity itself, then it must be said that Christ made an atonement for God and not for man; that He died for the good and benefit of God and not of man; and that which is called our redemption ought rather to be called the redemption of God, as saving and delivering Him, and not man, from His own wrath.

This blasphemy is unavoidable, if you

suppose that wrath, for which Christ died, to be a wrath in God Himself.

Again, the very nature of atonement absolutely shows that that which is to be atoned cannot possibly be in God, nor even in any good being. For atonement implies the alteration or removal of something that is not as it ought to be. And, therefore, every creature, so long as it is good, and has its proper state of goodness, neither wants nor can admit of any atonement, because it has nothing in it that wants to be altered or taken out of it. And therefore atonement cannot possibly have any place in God, because nothing in God either wants or can receive alteration; neither can it have place in any creature, but so far as it has lost or altered that which it had from God, and is fallen into disorder; and then, that which brings this creature back to its first state, which alters that which is wrong in it, and takes its evil out of it, is its true and proper atonement.

Water is the proper atonement of the rage of fire; and that which changes a tempest into a calm is its true atonement. And, therefore, as sure as Christ is a propitiation and an atonement, so sure is it that that which He does, as a propitiation and atonement, can have no place but in altering that evil and disorder which, in the state and life of the fallen creature, wants to be altered.

Suppose the creature not fallen, and then there is no room nor possibility for atonement; a plain and full proof that the work of atonement is nothing else but the altering or quenching that which is evil in the fallen creature.

Hell, wrath, darkness, misery, and eternal death mean the same thing through all Scripture, and these are the only things from which we want to be redeemed; and where there is nothing of hell, there, there is nothing of wrath, nor any thing that wants or can admit of the benefits of the atonement made by Christ.

Either, therefore, all hell is in the essence of the holy Deity, or nothing that wants to be atoned by the merits and death of Christ can possibly be in the Deity itself.

The apostle saith that "we are by nature children of wrath;" the same thing as when the Psalmist saith, "I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." And therefore that wrath, which wants the atonement of the sufferings, blood, and death of Christ, is no other than that sin or sinful state in which we are naturally born. But now, if this wrath could be supposed to be in the Deity itself, then it would follow that by "being by nature children of wrath," we should thereby be the true children of God, we should not want any atonement, or new birth from above, to make us partakers of the divine nature, because that wrath that was in us would be our dwelling in God, and He in us.

Again, All Scripture teaches us that God wills and desires the removal or extinction of that wrath which is betwixt God and the creature; and therefore all Scripture teaches that the wrath is not in God; for God cannot will the removal or alteration of any thing that is in Himself; this is as impossible as for Him to will the extinction of His own omnipotence. Nor can there be any thing in God contrary to or against His own will; and yet, if God wills the extinction of a wrath that is in Himself, it must be in Him contrary to or against His own will.

This, I presume, is enough to show you, that the atonement made by Christ is itself the greatest of all proofs that it was not to atone or extinguish any wrath in the Deity itself; nor, indeed, any way to affect or alter any quality or temper in the divine mind, but purely and solely to overcome and remove all that death, and hell, and wrath, and darkness that had opened itself in the nature, birth, and life of fallen man.

Eusebius.—The truth of all this is not to be denied. And yet it is as true that all our systems of divinity give quite another account of this most important matter. The satisfaction of Christ is represented as a satisfaction made to a wrathful Deity; and the merits of the sufferings and death of Christ as that which could only avail with God to give up His own wrath, and think of mercy towards man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the ground, and nature, and efficacy of this great transaction between God and man is often explained by

debtor and creditor. Man, as having contracted a debt with God that he could not pay, and God, as having a right to insist upon the payment of it; and therefore, only to be satisfied by receiving the death and sacrifice of Christ, as a valuable consideration, instead of the debt that was due to Him from man.

Theophilus.—Hence you may see, Eusebius, how unreasonably complaint has been sometimes made against the Appeal, the Spirit of Prayer, etc., as introducing a philosophy into the doctrines of the gospel not enough supported by the letter of Scripture; though every thing there asserted has been over and over shown to be well grounded on the letter of Scripture, and necessarily included in the most fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

Yet they who make this complaint blindly swallow a vanity of philosophy in the most important part of gospel religion, which not only has less Scripture for it than the infallibility of the Pope: but is directly contrary to the plain letter of every single text of Scripture that relates to this matter, as I will now show

you.

First, The apostle saith, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What becomes now of the philosophy of debtor and creditor, of a satisfaction made by Christ to a wrath in God? Is it not the grossest of all fictions, and in full contrariety to the plain written

word of God? "God so loved the world:" behold the degree of it! But when did He so love it? Why, before it was redeemed, before He sent or gave His only Son to be the Redeemer of it. Here you see that all wrath in God, antecedent to our redemption, or the sacrifice of Christ for us, is utterly excluded: there is no possibility for the supposition of it, it is as absolutely denied as words can do it. And therefore the infinite love, mercy, and compassion of God towards fallen man is not purchased or procured for us by the death of Christ, but the incarnation and sufferings of Christ come from, and are given to us by, the infinite, antecedent love of God for us, and are the gracious effects of His own love and goodness towards us.

It is needless to show you how constantly this same doctrine is asserted and

repeated by all the apostles.

Thus says St. John again, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Again, "This is the record that God hath given unto us, eternal life; and this life is in His Son." Again, "God (saith St. Paul) was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." Which is repeated and further opened in these words, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath

translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."\* And again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."†

How great therefore, Eusebius, is the error, how total the disregard of Scripture, and how vain the philosophy which talks of a wrath in God antecedent to our redemption, or of a debt which He could not forgive us till He had received a valuable consideration for it, when all Scripture from page to page tells us that all the mercy, and blessing, and benefits of Christ as our Saviour are the free antecedent gift of God Himself to us, and bestowed upon us for no other reason, from no other motive, but the infinity of His own love towards us, agreeable to what the evangelical prophet saith of God, "I am He that blotteth out transgressions for My own sake," ‡ that is, not for any reason or motive that can be laid before Me, but because I am love itself, and My own nature is My immutable reason why nothing but works of love, blessing, and goodness can come from Me.

Look we now at the Scripture account of the nature of the atonement and satisfaction of Christ, and this will further show us that it is not to atone or alter any quality or temper in the divine mind, nor for the sake of God, but purely and solely to atone, to quench, and over-

<sup>\*</sup> Col. i. 12, 13.

<sup>†</sup> Eph. i. 3.

<sup>‡</sup> Isa. xliii. 25.

come that death, and wrath, and hell, under the power of which man was fallen.

"As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." This is the whole work, the whole nature, and the sole end of Christ's sacrifice of Himself; and there is not a syllable in Scripture that gives you any other account of it; it all consists, from the beginning to the end, in carrying on the one work of regeneration: and therefore the apostle saith, "the first Adam was made a living soul, but the last or second Adam was made a quickening spirit," because sent into the world by God to quicken and revive that life from above which we lost in Adam. And He is called our ransom, our atonement, etc., for no other reason but because that which He did and suffered in our fallen nature was as truly an efficacious means of our being born again to a new heavenly life, of Him, and from Him, as that which Adam did was the true and natural cause of our being born in sin and the impurity of bestial flesh and blood.

And as Adam, by what he did, may be truly said to have purchased our misery and corruption, to have bought death for us, and to have sold us into a slavery under the world, the flesh, and the devil; though all that we have from him, or suffer by him, is only the inward working of his own nature, and life within us; so, according to the plain meaning of the words, Christ may be said to be our price, our ransom,

and atonement, though all that He does for us, as buying, ransoming, and redeeming us, is done wholly and solely by a birth of His own nature and

spirit, brought to life in us.

The apostle saith, "Christ died for our sins." Thence it is that He is the great sacrifice for sin, and its true atonement. But how and why is He so? The apostle tells you in these words, "The sting of death is sin; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:" and therefore Christ is the atonement of our sins, when, by and from Him living in us, we have victory over our sinful nature.

The Scriptures frequently say, "Christ gave Himself for us." But what is the full meaning, effect, and benefit of His thus giving Himself for us? The apostle puts this out of all doubt, when he says, "Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people.—That He might deliver us from this present evil world—from the curse of the law—from the power of Satan—from the wrath to come:" or, as the apostle saith in other words, "that He might be made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification."

The whole truth, therefore, of the matter is plainly this. Christ given for us is neither more nor less than Christ given into us. And He is in no other sense our full, perfect, and sufficient atonement, than as His nature and Spirit is born and formed in us, which so purgeth us

from our sins, that we are thereby in Him, and by Him dwelling in us, become new creatures, having our conversation in heaven.

As Adam is truly our defilement and impurity by his birth in us, so Christ is our atonement and purification by our being born again of Him, and having thereby quickened and revived in us that first divine life which was extinguished in Adam. And, therefore, as Adam purchased death for us, just so in the same manner, in the same degree, and in the same sense Christ purchases life for us. And each of them only and solely by their own inward life within us.

This is the one Scripture account of the whole nature, the sole end, and full efficacy of all that Christ did and suffered for us. It is all comprehended in these two texts of Scripture. (1) "That Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil." (2) "That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." From the beginning to the end of Christ's atoning work, no other power is ascribed to it, nothing else is intended by it, as an appeaser of wrath, but the destroying of all that in man which comes from the devil; no other merits, or value, or infinite worth than that of its infinite ability and sufficiency to quicken again in all human nature that heavenly life that died in Adam.

Eusebius.—Though all that is here said seems to have both the letter and spirit of Scripture on its side, yet I am afraid it will be thought not enough to assert the infinite value and merits of our Saviour's sufferings. For it is the common opinion of doctors that the righteousness or justice of God must have satisfaction done to it. And that nothing could avail with God, as a satisfaction, but the infinite worth and value of the sufferings of Christ.

Theophilus.—It is true, Eusebius, that this is often and almost always thus asserted in human writers, but it is neither the language nor the doctrine of Scripture.

Not a word is there said of a righteousness or justice as an attribute in God that must be satisfied, or that the sacrifice of Christ is that which satisfies the righteousness that is in God Himself.

It has been sufficiently proved to you that God wanted not to be reconciled to fallen man; that He never was any thing else towards him but love; and that His love brought forth the whole scheme of his redemption. Thence it is that the Scriptures do not say that Christ came into the world to procure us the divine favour and good will, for to put a stop to an antecedent righteous wrath in God towards us. No, the reverse of all this is the truth, viz. that Christ and His whole mediatorial office came purely and solely from God, already so reconciled to us as to bestow an infinity of love upon us. "The God of all grace (saith the apostle), who hath called us to His eternal glory, by Jesus Christ." \* Here,

you see, Christ is not the cause or motive of God's mercy towards fallen man, but God's own love for us, His own desire of our eternal glory and happiness, hath for that end given us Christ, that we may be made partakers of it. The same as when it is again said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," that is, calling and raising it out of its ungodly and miserable state.

Thus, all the mystery of our redemption proclaims nothing but a God of love towards fallen man. It was the love of God that could not behold the misery of fallen man without demanding and calling for his salvation. It was love alone that wanted to have full satisfaction done to it, and such a love as could not be satisfied till all that glory and happiness that was lost by the death of Adam was fully restored and regained again by the death of Christ.

Eusebius.—But is there not some good sense in which righteousness or justice may be said to be satisfied by the atonement and sacrifice of Christ?

Theophilus.—Yes, most certainly there is. But then it is only that righteousness or justice that belongs to man, and ought to be in him. Now righteousness, wherever it is to be, has no mercy in itself; it makes no condescensions; it is inflexibly rigid; its demands are inexorable; prayers, offerings, and entreaties have no effect upon it; it will have nothing but itself; nor will it ever cease its demands, or take any thing in lieu of them, as a satisfaction, instead of

itself. Thus, "Without holiness (saith the apostle) no man shall see the Lord." And again, "Nothing that is defiled or impure can enter into the kingdom of heaven." And this is meant by righteousness being rigid, and having no mercy; it cannot spare, or have pity, or hear entreaty, because all its demands are righteous and good, and therefore must be satisfied or fulfilled.

Now righteousness has its absolute demands upon man, because man was created righteous, and has lost that original righteousness, which he ought to have kept in its first purity. And this is the one, only righteousness or justice which Christ came into the world to satisfy, not by giving some highly valuable thing as a satisfaction to it, but by bringing back, or raising up again in all human nature, that holiness or righteousness which originally belonged to it. For to satisfy righteousness means neither more nor less than to fulfil it. Nor can righteousness want to have satisfaction in any being but in that being which has fallen from it; nor can it be satisfied but by restoring or fulfilling righteousness in that being which had departed from it. And therefore the apostle saith that "we are created again unto righteousness in Christ Jesus." And this is the one and only way of Christ's expiating or taking away the sins of the world, namely, by restoring to man his lost righteousness. "For this end (saith the Scripture), Christ gave Himself for the Church, that

He might sanctify and cleanse it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." \*

This is the one righteousness which Christ came into the world to satisfy, by fulfilling it Himself, and enabling man, by a new birth from Him, to fulfil it. And when all unrighteousness is removed by Christ from the whole human nature, then all that righteousness is satisfied; for the doing of which Christ-poured out His most precious, availing, and meritorious blood.

Eusebius.—Oh, Theophilus, the ground on which you stand must certainly be true. It so easily, so fully solves all difficulties and objections, and enables you to give so plain and solid an account of every part of our redemption. This great point is so fully cleared up to me, that I do not desire another word about it.

Theophilus.— However, Eusebius, I will add a word or two more upon it, that there may be no room left, either for misunderstanding or denying what has been just now said of the nature of that righteousness, which must have full satisfaction done to it by the atoning and redeeming work of Christ. And then you will be fully possessed of these two great truths. First, That there is no righteous wrath in the Deity itself, and therefore none to be atoned there. Secondly, That though God is in

<sup>\*</sup> Eph. v. 25-27.

Himself a mere infinity of love, from whom nothing else but works of love, and blessing, and goodness can proceed, yet sinful men are hereby not at all delivered from that which the apostle calls "the terrors of the Lord," but that all the threatenings of woe, misery, and punishment, denounced in Scripture against sin and sinners, both in this world and that which is to come, stand all of them in their full force, and are not in the least degree weakened, or less to be dreaded, because God is all love.

Every thing that God hath created is right, and just, and good in its kind, and hath its own righteousness within itself. The rectitude of its nature is its only law: and it hath no other righteousness, but that of continuing in its first state. No creature is subject to any pain, or punishment, or guilt of sin, but because it has departed from its first right state, and only does and can feel the painful loss of its own first perfection. And every intelligent creature that departs from the state of its creation is unrighteous, evil, and full of its own misery. And there is no possibility for any disordered, fallen creature to be free from its own misery and pain till it is again in its first state of perfection. This is the certain and infallible ground of the absolute necessity either of a perfect holiness in this life, or of a further purification after death, before man can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Now this pain and misery, which is

inseparable from the creature that is not in that state in which it ought to be and in which it was created, is nothing else but the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper righteousness, as sickness is the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper health.

No other righteousness, no other justice, no other severe vengeance demands satisfaction, or torments the sinner, but that very righteousness which once was in him, which still belongs to him, and therefore will not suffer him to have any rest or peace till it is again in him, as it was at the first. All, therefore, that Christ does as an atonement for sin, or as a satisfaction to righteousness, is all done in, and to, and for man, and has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man, and raising it up into its first state of original righteousness. And if this righteousness, which belongs solely to man, and wants no satisfaction but that of being restored and fulfilled in the human nature, is sometimes called the righteousness of God: it is only so called because it is a righteousness which man had originally from God, in and by his creation; and therefore, as it comes from God, has its whole nature and power of working as it does from God, it may very justly be called God's righteousness.

Agreeably to this way of ascribing that to God which is only in the state and condition of man, the Psalmist saith of God, "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and Thy hand presseth me sore." And yet nothing else or more is meant by it, than when he saith, "My sins have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up.—My wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear."

Now, whether you call this state of man the burden of his sins and wickednesses, or the arrows of the Almighty, and the weight of God's hand, they mean but one and the same thing, which can only be called by these different names for no other reason but this, because man's own original righteousness, which he had from God, makes his sinful state a pain and torment to him, and lies heavy upon him in every commission of sin. And when the Psalmist again saith, "Take Thy plague away from me, I am even consumed by means of Thy heavy hand;" it is only praying to be delivered from his own plague; and praying for the same thing as when he saith, in other words, "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Now this language of Scripture, which teaches us to call the pains and torments of our sins the arrows, darts, and strokes of God's hand upon us, which calls us to own the power, presence, and operation of God in all that we feel and find in our own inward state, is the language of the most exalted piety; and highly suitable to that scripture which tells us that "in God we live, and move,

and have our being." For by teaching us to find and own the power and operation of God in every thing that passes within us, it keeps us continually turned to God for all that we want, and by all that we feel within ourselves; and brings us to this best of all confessions, that pain, as well as peace of mind, is the effect and manifestation of God's infinite love and goodness towards us.

For we could not have this pain and sensibility of the burden of sin, but because the love and goodness of God made us originally righteous and happy; and therefore all the pains and torments of sin come from God's first goodness towards us, and are in themselves merely and truly the arrows of His love, and His blessed means of drawing us back to that first righteous state in and for which His first and never-ceasing love created us.

Eusebius.— The matter, therefore, plainly stands thus. There is no right-eous wrath, or vindictive justice in the Deity itself; which, as a quality or attribute of resentment in the divine mind, wants to be contented, atoned, or satisfied; but man's original righteousness, which was once his peace, and happiness, and rest in God, is, by the fall of Adam, become his tormentor, his plague, that continually exercises its good vengeance upon him, till it truly regains its first state in him.

Secondly, Man must be under this pain, punishment, and vengeance to all eternity; there is no possibility, in

the nature of the thing, for it to be otherwise, though God be all love, unless man's lost righteousness be fully again possessed by him. And therefore the doctrine of God's being all love, of having no wrath in Himself, has nothing in it to abate the force of those scriptures which threaten punishment to sinners, or to make them less fearful of living and dying in their sins.

Theophilus .- What you say, Eusebius, is very true; but then it is but half the truth of this matter. You should have added, that this doctrine is the one ground and only reason why the Scriptures abound with so many declarations of woe, misery, and judgments, sometimes executed, and sometimes only threatened by God; and why all sinners, to the end of the world, must know and feel, "That the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, must be upon every soul of man that doeth evil."\*

For all these things, which the apostle elsewhere calls "the terrors of the Lord," have no ground, nothing that calls for them, nothing that vindicates the fitness and justice of them, either with regard to God or man, but this one truth, viz. that God is in Himself a mere infinity of love, from whom nothing but outflowings of love and goodness can come forth from eternity to eternity. For, if God is all love, if He wills nothing towards

<sup>\*</sup> Rom. i. 18, ii. 8, 9.

fallen man, but his full deliverance from the blind slavery and captivity of his earthly, bestial nature, then every kind of punishment, distress, and affliction that can extinguish "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of this life," may and ought to be expected from God, merely because He is all love and good will towards fallen man.

To say, therefore, as some have said, if God is all love towards fallen man, how can He threaten or chastise sinners? is no better than saying, if God is all goodness in Himself, and towards man, how can He do that in and to man which is for his good? As absurd as to say, if the able physician is all love, goodness, and good will towards his patients, how can he blister, purge, or scarify them, how can he order one to be trepanned, and another to have a limb cut off? Nav. so absurd is this reasoning, that if it could be proved that God had no chastisement for sinners, the very want of this chastisement would be the greatest of all proofs that God was not all love and goodness towards man.

The meek, merciful, and compassionate Jesus, who had no errand in this world but to bless and save mankind, said, If thy right eye or thy right hand offend thee, pluck out the one, cut off the other, and cast them from thee. And that He said all this from mere love, He adds, It is better for thee to do this, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell; therefore, if the holy Jesus had

been wanting in this severity, He had been wanting in true love towards man.

And, therefore, the pure, mere love of God is that alone from which sinners are justly to expect from God that no sin will pass unpunished, but that His love will visit them with every calamity and distress that can help to break and purify the bestial heart of man, and awaken in him true repentance and conversion to God. It is love alone in the holy Deity that will allow no peace to the wicked, nor ever cease its judgments till every sinner is forced to confess "that it is good for him that he has been in trouble;" and thankfully own that not the wrath, but the love of God has plucked out that right eye, cut off that right hand, which he ought to have done, but would not do, for himself and his own salvation.

Again, This doctrine that allows of no wrath in the divine mind, but places it all in the evil state of fallen nature and creature, has everything in it that can prove to man the dreadful nature of sin. and the absolute necessity of totally departing from it. It leaves no room for self-delusion, but puts an end to every false hope, or vain seeking for relief in any thing else but the total extinction of sin. And this it effectually does, by showing that damnation is no foreign, separate, or imposed state that is brought in upon us, or adjudged to us, by the will of God: but is the inborn, natural, essential state of our own disordered nature. which is absolutely impossible, in the

nature of the thing, to be any thing else but our own hell, both here and hereafter, unless all sin be separated from us, and righteousness be again made our natural state, by a birth of itself in us. And all this, not because God will have it so by an arbitrary act of His sovereign will, but because He cannot change His own nature, or make any thing to be happy and blessed, but only that which has its proper righteousness, and is of one will and spirit with Himself.

If, then, every creature that has lost or is without the true rectitude of its nature, must, as such, be of all necessity absolutely separated from God; and necessarily under the pain and misery of a life that has lost all its own natural good, if no omnipotence, or mercy, or goodness of God can make it to be otherwise, or give any relief to the sinner, but by a total extinction of sin. by a birth of righteousness in the soul, then it fully appears that, according to this doctrine, every thing in God, and nature, and creature calls the sinner to an absolute renunciation of all sin, as the one only possible means of salvation. and leaves no room for him to deceive himself with the hopes that any thing else will do instead of it. Vainly, therefore, is it said, that if God be all love, the sinner is let loose from the dreadful apprehensions of living and dying in his sins.

On the other hand, deny this doctrine, and say, with the current of scholastic divines, that sin must be doomed to eternal pain and death, unless a supposed wrath in the mind of the Deity be first atoned and satisfied; and that Christ's death was that valuable gift or offering made to God, by which alone He could be moved to lay aside or extinguish His own wrath towards fallen man: say this, and then you open a wide door for licentiousness and infidelity in some, and superstitious fears in others.

For if the evil, the misery, and sad effects of sin is placed in a wrath in the divine mind, what can this beget in the minds of the pious but superstitious fears about a supposed wrath in God, which they can never know when it is or is not atoned? Every kind of superstition has its birth from this belief, and cannot well be otherwise. And as to the licentious. who want to stifle all fears of gratifying all their passions; this doctrine has a natural tendency to do this for them. For if they are taught that the hurt and misery of sin is not its own natural state, not owing to its own wrath and disorder, but to a wrath in the Deity: how easy is it for them to believe, either that God may not be so full of wrath as is given out, or that He may overcome it Himself, and not keep the sinner eternally in a misery that is not his own, but wholly brought upon him from without, by a resentment in the divine mind.

Again, This account which the schools give of the sacrifice of Christ, made to atone a wrath in the Deity, by the infinite value of Christ's death, is that alone which helps Socinians, deists,

and infidels of all kinds, to such cavils and objections to the mystery of our redemption, as neither have, nor can be silenced by the most able defenders of that scholastic fiction. The learning of a Grotius or Stillingfleet, when defending such an account of the atonement and satisfaction, rather increases than lessens the objections to this mystery, but if you take this matter as it truly is in itself, viz. That God is in Himself all love and goodness, therefore can be nothing else but all love and goodness towards fallen man, and that fallen man is subject to no pain or misery, either present or to come, but what is the natural, unavoidable, essential effect of his own evil and disordered nature, impossible to be altered by himself; and that the infinite, never-ceasing love of God has given Jesus Christ, in all His process, as the highest and only possible means that heaven and earth can afford to save man from himself, from his own evil, misery, and death, and restore to him his original divine life. When you look at this matter in this true light, then a God, all love, and an atonement for sin by Christ, not made to pacify a wrath in God, but to bring forth, fulfil, and restore righteousness in the creature that had lost it, has every thing in it that can make the providence of God adorable and the state of man comfortable.

Here all superstition and superstitious fears are at once totally cut off, and every work of piety is turned into a work of love. Here every false hope of every kind is taken from the licentious, they have no ground left to stand upon. Nothing to trust to, as a deliverance from misery, but the one total abolition of sin.

The Socinian and the infidel are here also robbed of all their philosophy against this mystery; for, as it is not founded upon, does not teach an infinite resentment, that could only be satisfied by an infinite atonement, as it stands not upon the ground of debtor and creditor, all their arguments which suppose it to be such are quite beside the matter, and touch nothing of the truth of this blessed mystery. For it is the very reverse of all this, it declares a God that is all love; and the atonement of Christ to be nothing else in itself but the highest, most natural, and efficacious means, through all the possibility of things. that the infinite love and wisdom of God could use to put an end to sin, and death, and hell; and restore to man his first divine state or life. I say, the most natural, efficacious means through all the possibilities of nature; for there is nothing that is supernatural, however mysterious, in the whole system of our redemption; every part of it has its ground in the workings and powers of nature, and all our redemption is only nature set right, or made to be that which it ought to be.

There is nothing that is supernatural but God alone; every thing besides Him is from and subject to the state of nature: it can never rise out of it, or have any thing contrary to it. No creature can have either health or sickness, good or evil, or any state either from God or itself, but strictly according to the capacities, powers, and workings of nature.

The mystery of our redemption, though it comes from the supernatural God, has nothing in it but what is done, and to be done, within the sphere and according to the powers of nature. There is nothing supernatural in it, or belonging to it, but that supernatural love and wisdom which brought it forth, presides over it, and will direct it, till Christ, as a second Adam, has removed and extinguished all that evil which the first Adam brought into the human nature.

And the whole process of Jesus Christ, from His being the inspoken word, or bruiser of the serpent, given to Adam, to His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, has all its ground and reason in this, because nothing else in all the possibilities of nature, either in heaven or on earth, could begin, carry on, and totally effect man's deliverance from the evil of his own fallen nature.

Thus is Christ the one full, sufficient atonement for the sin of the whole world, because He is the one only natural remedy and possible cure of all the evil that is broke forth in nature, the one only natural life and resurrection of all that holiness and happiness that died in Adam. And seeing all this process of Christ is given to the world, from

the supernatural, antecedent, infinite love of God, therefore is it that the apostle saith, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." And Christ in God is nothing else in His whole nature but that same certain and natural parent of a redemption to the whole human nature, as fallen Adam was the certain and natural parent of a miserable life to every man that is descended from him. With this only difference, that from fallen Adam we are born in sin, whether we will or no, but we cannot have that new birth which Christ has all power to bring forth in us, unless the will of our heart closes with it.

But as nothing came to us from Adam, but according to the powers of nature, and because he was that which he was, with relation to us; so it is with Christ, and our redemption by Him: all the work is grounded in and proceeds according to the powers of nature, or in a way of natural efficacy or fitness to produce its effects; and every thing that is found in the person, character, and condition of Christ is only there as His true and natural qualification to do all that He came to do, in us, and for us. That is to say, Christ was made to be that which He was; He was a seed of life in our first fallen father; He lived as a blessing of promise in the patriarchs, prophets, and Israel of God: He was born as a man of a pure virgin; He did all that He did, whether as suffering, dying, conquering, rising, and ascending into heaven, only as so many things, which as naturally,

and as truly, according to the nature of things, qualified Him to be the producer or quickener of a divine life in us, as the state and condition of Adam qualified him to make us the slavish children of earthly, bestial flesh and blood.

This is the comfortable doctrine of our redemption; nothing in God but an infinity of love and goodness towards our fallen condition; nothing in Christ but that which had its necessity in the nature of things, to make Him able to give and us to receive our full salvation from him.

I will now only add, that from the beginning of deism, and from the time of Socinus, to this day, not a Socinian or deist have ever seen or opposed this mystery in its true state, as is undeniably plain from all their writings.

A late writer, who has as much knowledge, and zeal, and wit in the cause of deism as any of his predecessors, is forced to attack our redemption by giving this false following account of it.

"That a perfectly innocent being, of the highest order among intelligent natures, should personate the offender, and suffer in his place and stead, in order to take down the wrath and resentment of the Deity against the criminal, and dispose God to show mercy to him,—the deist conceives to be both unnatural and improper, and therefore not to be ascribed to God without blasphemy."

And again, "The common notion of redemption among Christians seems to represent the Deity in a disagreeable light, as implacable and revengeful," etc.\*

What an arrow is here, I will not say, shot beside the mark, but shot at nothing? Because nothing of that which he accuses is to be found in our redemption. The God of Christians is so far from being, as he says, implacable and revengeful, that you have seen it proved, from text to text, that the whole form and manner of our redemption comes wholly from the free, antecedent, infinite love and goodness of God towards fallen man. That the innocent Christ did not suffer to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as co-operating, assisting, and uniting with that love of God which desired our salvation. That He did not suffer in our place or stead, but only on our account, which is quite a different matter. And to say that He suffered in our place or stead is as absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say that He rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, in our place and stead, that we might be excused from it. For His sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension are all of them equally on our account, for our sake, for our good and benefit, but none of them possible to be in our stead.

And as Scripture and truth affirm that He ascended into heaven for us, though neither Scripture nor truth will allow it to be in our place and stead; so, for the same reasons, it is strictly true that

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Deism fairly Stated and fully Vindicated,"

He suffered and died for us, though no more in our place or stead, nor any more desirable to be so, than His ascension into heaven for us should be in our place and stead.

I have quoted the above passage only to show you that a defender of Deism, however acute and ingenious, has not one objection to the doctrine of our redemption, but what is founded on the grossest ignorance and total mistake of the whole nature of it. But when I lay this gross ignorance to the deists' charge, I do not mean any natural dulness, want of parts, or incapacity in them to judge aright, but only that something or other, either men, or books, or their own way of life, has hindered their seeing the true ground and real nature of Christianity, as it is in itself.

Eusebius.-I would fain hope, Theophilus, that from all that has been said in the Demonstration of the Fundamental Errors of the Plain Account. the Appeal to All that Doubt, etc., and the rest that follow, to these dialogues, in all which Christianity and deism, with their several merits, are so plainly, and with so much good will and affection towards all unbelievers, represented to them: all that are serious and well minded amongst the deists will be prevailed upon to reconsider the matter. For though some people have been hasty enough to charge those writings with fanaticism, or enthusiasm, as disclaiming the use of our reason in religious matters, vet this charge can be made by none but those who, having not read them, take up with hearsay censures.

For in those books, from the beginning to the end, nothing is appealed to but the natural light of the mind, and the plain, known nature of things; no one is led, or desired to go one step farther. The use of reason is not only allowed, but asserted and proved to be of the same service to us in things of religion, as in things that relate to our senses in this world.\*

The true ground, nature, and power of faith is opened by fully proving that this saying of Christ, "According to thy faith, so be it done unto thee," takes in every individual of human nature; and that all men, whether Christians, deists, idolaters, or atheists, are all of them equally men of faith, all equally and absolutely governed by it, and therefore must have all that they have, salvation or damnation, strictly and solely according to their faith.† All this is so evidently proved, that I cannot help thinking but that every considerate reader must be forced to own it.

Theogenes.—All this is well said. But let us now return to the finishing of our main point, which was to show that the doctrine of a God all love does not only destroy the necessity of Christ's death, and the infinite value and merits of it, but is itself the fullest proof and strongest confirmation of both.

Theophilus .- How it could enter into

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Demonst. of Errors of the Plain Accounts."

<sup>† &</sup>quot;Way to Divine Knowledge."

any one's head to charge this doctrine with destroying the necessity and merits of Christ's death, is exceeding

strange.

For, look where you will, no other cause or reason of the death of Christ can be found, but in the love of God towards fallen man. Nor could the love of God will or accept of the death of Christ, but because of its absolute necessity and availing efficacy to do all that for fallen man, which the love of God would have to be done for him.

God did not, could not love, or like, or desire the sufferings and death of Christ for what they were in themselves, or as sufferings of the highest kind. No, the higher and greater such sufferings had been, were they only considered in themselves, the less pleasing they had been to a God that wills nothing but blessing and happiness to every thing capable of it.

But all that Christ was, and did, and suffered was infinitely prized, and highly acceptable to the love of God, because all that Christ was, and did, and suffered in His own person was that which gave Him full power to be a common Father of life to all that died in Adam.

Had Christ wanted any thing that He was, or did, or suffered in His own person, He could not have stood in that relation to all mankind as Adam had done. Had He not been given to the first fallen man as a seed of the woman, as a light of life, "enlightening every man that comes

into the world," He could not have had His seed in every man, as Adam had, nor been as universal a Father of life, as Adam was of death. Had He not in the fitness or fulness of time become a man, born of a pure virgin, the first seed of life in every man must have lain only as a seed, and could not have come to the fulness of the birth of a new man in Christ Iesus. For the children can have no other state of life but that which their father first had. And therefore Christ, as the Father of a regenerated human race, must first stand in the fulness of that human state, which was to be derived from Him into all His children.

This is the absolute necessity of Christ's being all that He was before He became man; a necessity arising from the nature of the thing. Because He could not possibly have had the relation of a Father to all mankind, nor any power to be a quickener of a life of heaven in them, but because He was both God in Himself, and a seed of God in all of them.

Now all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, after He became man, is from the same necessity founded in the nature of the thing. He suffered on no other account, but because that which He came to do in and for the human nature was, and could be, nothing else in itself but a work of sufferings and death.

A crooked line cannot become straight but by having all its crookedness given up, or taken from it. And there is but one way possible in nature for a crooked line to lose its crookedness. Now the sufferings and death of Christ stand in this kind of necessity. He was made man for our salvation, that is, He took upon Him our fallen nature, to bring it out of its evil, crooked state, and set it again in that rectitude in which it was created.

Now there was no more two ways of doing this, than there are two ways of making a crooked line to become straight.

If the life of fallen nature, which Christ had taken upon Him, was to be overcome by Him, then every kind of suffering and dying, that was a giving up or departing from the life of fallen nature, was just as necessary, in the nature of the thing, as that the line to be made straight must give up and part with every kind and degree of its own crookedness.

And therefore the sufferings and death of Christ were, in the nature of the thing, the only possible way of His acting contrary to and overcoming all the evil that was in the fallen state of man.

The apostle saith, "The Captain of our salvation was to be made perfect through sufferings." This was the ground and reason of His sufferings: had He been without them, He could not have been perfect in Himself, as a Son of man, nor the restorer of perfection in all mankind. But why so? Because His perfection as a Son of man, or the Captain of human salvation, could only consist in His acting in and with a spirit suitable to the first created state of perfect man; that is, He must in His spirit be as much above all the good and evil

of this fallen world, as the first man was.

But now, He could not show that He was of this spirit, that He was above the world, that He was under no power of fallen nature, but lived in the perfection of the first created man. He could not do this but by showing that all the good of the earthly life was renounced by Him, and that all the evil which the world, the malice of men and devils, could bring upon Him, could not hinder His living wholly and solely to God, and doing His will on earth with the same fulness as angels do it in heaven.

But had there been any evil in all fallen nature, whether in life, death, or hell, that had not attacked Him with all its force, He could not have been said to have overcome it. And therefore so sure as Christ, as the Son of man, was to overcome the world, death, hell, and Satan, so sure is it that all the evils which they could possibly bring upon Him were to be felt and suffered by Him, as absolutely necessary, in the nature of the thing, to declare His perfection, and prove His superiority over them. Surely, my friend, it is now enough proved to you how a God all love towards fallen man must love, like, desire, and delight in all the sufferings of Christ, which alone could enable Him, as a Son of man, to undo and reverse all that evil which the first man had done to all His posterity.

Eusebius. - Oh, sir, in what an adorable light is this mystery now placed. And yet in no other light than that in which the plain letter of all Scripture sets it. No wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor, no suffering in Christ for suffering's sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as His same victory over death and hell, as when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

Theophilus.—Sure now, Eusebius, you plainly enough see wherein the infinite merits, or the availing efficacy and glorious power of the sufferings and death of Christ consists; since they were that in and through which Christ Himself came out of the state of fallen nature, and got power to give the same victory to all His brethren of the human race.

Wonder not, therefore, that the Scriptures so frequently ascribe all our salvation to the sufferings and death of Christ, that we are continually referred to them, as the wounds and stripes by which we are healed, as the blood by which we are washed from our sins, as the price (much above gold and precious stones) by which we are bought.

Wonder not also that in the Old Testament, its service, sacrifices, and ceremonies were instituted to typify and point at the great sacrifice of Christ, and to keep up a continual hope, strong expectation, and belief of it. And that in the New Testament, the reality, the benefits, and glorious effects of Christ our passover, being actually sacrificed for us, are so joyfully repeated by every apostle.

It is because Christ, as suffering and

dying, was nothing else but Christ conquering and overcoming all the false good and the hellish evil of the fallen state of man.

His resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven, though great in themselves, and necessary parts of our deliverance, were yet but the consequences and genuine effects of His sufferings and death. These were, in themselves, the reality of His conquest; all His great work was done and effected in them and by them, and His resurrection and ascension was only His entering into the possession of that which His sufferings and death had gained for Him.

Wonder not, then, that all the true followers of Christ, the saints of every age, have so gloried in the cross of Christ, have imputed such great things to it, have desired nothing so much as to be partakers of it, to live in constant union with it. It is because His sufferings, His death, and cross were the fulness of His victory over all the works of the devil. Not an evil in flesh and blood, not a misery of life, not a chain of death, not a power of hell and darkness, but were all baffled, broken, and overcome by the process of a suffering and dying Christ. Well therefore may the cross of Christ be the glory of Christians.

Eusebius.—This matter is so solidly and fully cleared up, that I am almost ashamed to ask you any thing further about it. Yet explain a little more, if you please, how it is that the sufferings

and death of Christ gave Him power to become a common Father of life to all that died in Adam. Or how it is that we, by virtue of them, have victory over all the evil of our fallen state.

Theophilus.—You are to know, Eusebius, that the Christian religion is no arbitrary system of divine worship, but is the one true, real, and only religion of nature, that is, it is wholly founded in the nature of things, has nothing in it supernatural, or contrary to the powers and demands of nature; but all that it does is only in, and by, and according to the workings and possibilities of nature.

A religion that is not founded in nature is all fiction and falsity, and as mere a nothing as an idol. For as no creature can be or have anything in it but what it is and has from the nature of things, nor have anything done to it, good or harm, but according to the unalterable workings of nature; so no religion can be of any service but that which works with and according to the demands of nature. Nor can any fallen creature be raised out of its fallen state, even by the omnipotence of God, but according to the nature of things, or the unchangeable powers of nature; for nature is the opening and manifestation of the divine omnipotence: it is God's power-world: and therefore all that God doth is and must be done in and by the powers of nature. God, though omnipotent, can give no existence to any creature, but it must have that existence in space and time. — Time cometh out of the eternity, and space cometh out of the infinity of God—God hath an omnipotent power over them, in them, and with them, to make both of them set forth and manifest the wonders of His supernatural Deity. Yet time can only be subservient to the omnipotence of God according to the nature of time, and space can only obey His will according to the nature of space; but neither of them can, by any power, be made to be in a supernatural state, or be any thing but what they are in their own nature.

Now right and wrong, good and evil, true and false, happiness and misery, are as unchangeable in nature as time and space. And every state and quality that is creaturely, or that can belong to any creature, has its own nature, as unchangeably as time and space have theirs.

Nothing, therefore, can be done to any creature supernaturally, or in a way that is without, or contrary to, the powers of nature; but every thing or creature that is to be helped, that is to have any good done to it, or any evil taken out of it, can only have it done so far as the powers of nature are able and rightly directed to effect it.

And this is the true ground of all divine revelation, or that help which the supernatural Deity vouchsafes to the fallen state of man. It is not to appoint an arbitrary system of religious homage to God, but solely to point out and provide for man, blinded by his fallen state, that one only religion that, according to the

nature of things, can possibly restore to him his lost perfection. This is the truth, the goodness, and the necessity of the Christian religion; it is true and good and necessary, because it is as much the one only natural and possible way of overcoming all the evil of fallen man, as light is the one only natural, possible thing that can expel darkness.

And therefore it is that all the mysteries of the gospel, however high, are yet true and necessary parts of the one religion of nature; because they are no higher nor otherwise than the natural state of fallen man absolutely stands in need of. His nature cannot be helped, or raised out of the evils of its present state, by any thing less than these mysteries; and therefore they are in the same truth and justness to be called his natural religion; as that remedy which alone has full power to remove all the evil of a disease may be justly called its natural remedy.

For a religion is not to be deemed natural because it has nothing to do with revelation; but then is it the one true religion of nature, when it has every thing in it that our natural state stands in need of; every thing that can help us out of our present evil, and raise and exalt us to all the happiness which our nature is capable of having. Supposing, therefore, the Christian scheme of redemption to be all that, and nothing else in itself, but that which the nature of things absolutely require it to be, it

must, for that very reason, have its mysteries.

For the fallen, corrupt, mortal state of man absolutely requires these two things as its only salvation. First, the divine life, or the life of God, must be quickened again, or revived in the soul of man. Secondly, there must be a resurrection of the body in a better state after death. Now nothing in the power of man, or in the things of this world, can effect this salvation. If, therefore, this is to be the salvation of man, then some interposition of the Deity is absolutely necessary, in the nature of the thing, or man can have no religion that is sufficiently natural; that is to say, no religion that is sufficient, or equal to the wants of his nature.

Now this necessary interposition of the Deity, though doing nothing but in a natural way, or according to the nature of things, must be mysterious to man, because it is doing something more and higher than his senses or reason ever saw done, or possible to be done, either by himself, or any of the powers of this world.

And this is the true ground and nature of the mysteries of Christian redemption. They are, in themselves, nothing else but what the nature of things require them to be, as natural, efficacious means of our salvation, and all their power is in a natural way, or true fitness of cause for its effect; but they are mysterious to man, because brought into the scheme of our redemption, by the interposition of God, to work in a way and manner above and superior to all that is seen and done in the things of this world.

The mysteries, therefore, of the gospel are so far from showing the gospel not to be the one true religion of nature, that they are the greatest proofs of it, since they are that alone which can help man to all that good which his natural state wants to have done to it.

For instance, if the salvation of man absolutely requires the revival or restoration of the divine life in the human nature, then nothing can be the one sufficient, true religion of nature but that which has a natural power to do this.

What a grossness of error is it, therefore, to blame that doctrine which asserts the incarnation of the Son of God, or the necessity of the word being made flesh; when, in the nature of the thing, nothing else but this very mystery can be the natural, efficacious cause of the renewal of the divine life in the human nature, or have any natural efficacy to effect our salvation.

Having now, Eusebius, established this ground, that nothing is or can be a part of true, natural religion, or have any real efficacy in and from the nature of things, or in the natural fitness of cause to produce its effect, you are brought into the clear view of this truth, viz. That the religion of deism is false, and vain, and visionary, and to be rejected by every man, as the mere enthusiastic, fanatic product of pure imagination; and all for this plain reason, because it

quite disregards the nature of things, stands wholly upon a supernatural ground, and goes as much above, and as directly contrary to, the powers of nature, as that faith that trusts in, and prays to, a wooden god.

I say not this (as is too commonly done) in the spirit of accusation, or to raise an odium; no, by no means. I have the utmost aversion to such a procedure; I would no more bring a false charge against the deist, than I would bear false witness against an apostle. And I desire to have no other temper, spirit, or behaviour towards them, but such as the loving God with all my heart, and loving them as I love myself, requires of me. And in this spirit of love I charge them with visionary faith and enthusiastic religion; and only so far as I have from time to time proved that they trust to be saved by that which, according to the unchangeable nature of things, can have no power of salvation in it.

For a religion, not grounded in the power and nature of things, is unnatural, supernatural, or superrational, and is rightly called, either enthusiasm, vision, fanaticism, superstition, or idolatry, just as you please. For all these are but different names for one and the same religious delusion. And every religion is this delusion, but that one religion which is required by, and has its efficacy in and from, the unchangeable nature of things.

And thus stands the matter betwixt the deists and myself; if I knew how to do them or the subject more justice, I would gladly do it, having no desire, either for them or myself, but that we may all of us be delivered from every thing that separates us from God, all equal sharers of every blessing that He has for human nature, all united in that spirit of love and goodness for which He created us, and all blessed with that faith and hope to which the God of love has called us, as the one only possible, natural, and full means of ever finding ourselves saved and redeemed from all the evils both of time and eternity.

And now, Eusebius, upon this ground, viz. (1) That there is but one true religion, and that it is the religion of nature. (2) That a religion has no pretence to be considered as the religion of nature, because it rejects divine revelation, and has only human reason for its guide, but wholly and solely because it has every good in it that the natural state of man wants, and can receive from religion. (3) That nothing can be any religious good, or have any real efficacy as a means of salvation, but only that which has its efficacy in and from the natural power of things, or the fitness and sufficiency of cause to produce its effect. (4) That the religion of the gospel, in all its mysteries and doctrines, is wholly grounded in the natural powers of things, and their fitness to produce their effects. Upon this ground, I come to answer your question, viz. How it is that the sufferings and death of Christ gave Him full power to become a common Father of life to all those that died in Adam? Or how it is that we, by virtue of them, are delivered out of all the evils of our fallen state?

The sufferings and death of Christ have no supernatural effect, or that is above or contrary to nature. Because the thing itself is impossible; for a thing is only therefore impossible, because the nature of things will not allow of it.

The fall of all mankind in Adam is no supernatural event or effect, but the natural and necessary consequence of our relation to him. Could Adam, at his fall into this earthly life, have absolutely overcome every power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the same spirit as Christ did, he had been his own redeemer, had risen out of his fall, and ascended into Paradise, and been the father of a paradisiacal offspring, just as Christ, when He had overcome them all, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But Adam did not do this. because it was as impossible, in the nature of the thing, as for a beast to raise itself into an angel. If, therefore, man is to come out of his fallen state, there must be something found out that, according to the nature of things, hath power to effect it. For it can no more be done supernaturally by any thing else, than it could by Adam.

Now the matter stood thus, the seed of all mankind was in the loins of fallen Adam. This was unalterable in the nature of the thing, and therefore all mankind must come forth in his fallen state.

Neither can they ever be in any state whatever, whether earthly or heavenly, but by having an earthly man or a heavenly man for their father. mankind, as such, must of all necessity be born of, and have that nature which it hath, from a man. And this is the true ground and absolute necessity of the one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. For seeing mankind, as such, must have that birth and nature which they have from man, seeing they never could have had any relation to Paradise, or any possibility of partaking of it, but because they had a paradisiacal man for their father, never could have had any relation to this earthly world, or any possibility of being born earthly, but because they had an earthly man for their father; and seeing all this must be unalterably so for ever, it plainly follows that there was an utter impossibility for the seed of Adam ever to come out of its fallen state, or ever have another or better life than they had from Adam, unless such a son of man could be brought into existence. as had the same relation to all mankind as Adam had, was as much in them all as Adam was, and had as full power, according to the nature of things, to give a heavenly life to all the seed in Adam's loins, as Adam had to bring them forth in earthly flesh and blood.

And now, sir, that Christ was this very Son of man, standing in the same fulness of relation to all mankind as Adam did, having His seed as really in them all as Adam had, and as truly

and fully qualified, according to the nature of things, to be a common and universal Father of life, as Adam was of death, to all the human race, shall, in a word or two, be made as plain and undeniable as that two and two are four.

The doctrine of our redemption absolutely asserts that the seed of Christ was sown into the first fallen father of mankind, called the seed of the woman, the bruiser of the serpent, the engrafted word of life, called again in the gospel "that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Therefore Christ was in all men, in that same fulness of the relation of a Father to all mankind, as Adam the first was. Secondly, Christ was born of Adam's flesh and blood, took the human nature upon Him, and therefore stood as an human creature in the same relation to mankind as Adam did. Nothing, therefore, was further wanting in Christ, to make Him as truly a natural Father of life to all mankind as Adam was at first, but God's appointment of Him to that end.

For as Adam could not have been the natural father of mankind but because God created and appointed him for that end, so Christ could not have been the natural Regenerator or Redeemer of an heavenly life, that was lost in all mankind, but because God had appointed and brought Him into the world for that end. Now that God did this, that Christ came into the world by divine appointment, to be the Saviour, the resurrection, and life

of all mankind, is a truth as evident from Scripture, as that Adam was the first man.

And thus it appears, in the utmost degree of plainness and certainty, that Christ in His single person was, according to the nature of things, as fully qualified to be a common Redeemer as Adam was, in his single person, to be a common father of all mankind. He had His seed in all mankind, as Adam had: He had the human nature, as Adam had; and He had the same divine appointment as Adam had. Christ, however qualified to be our Redeemer, could not be actually such till He had gone through and done all that by which our redemption was to be effected.

Adam, however qualified, yet could not be the father of a paradisiacal offspring till he had stood out his trial, and fixed himself victorious over every thing that could make trial of him. In like manner, Christ, however qualified, could not be the Redeemer of all mankind till He had also stood out His trial, had overcome all that by which Adam was overcome, and had fixed Himself triumphantly in that Paradise which Adam had lost.

Now, as Adam's trial was, whether he would keep himself in his paradisiacal state, above and free from all that was good and evil in this earthly world, so Christ's trial was, whether as a Son of man, and loaded with the infirmities of fallen Adam, sacrificed to all that which the rage and malice of the world, hell, and

devils could possibly do to Him, whether He in the midst of all these evils could live and die with His spirit as contrary to them, as much above them, as unhurt by them, as Adam should have lived in Paradise.

And then it was that every thing which had overcome Adam was overcome by Christ, and Christ's victory did, in the nature of the thing, as certainly and fully open an entrance for Him and all His seed into Paradise, as Adam's fall cast him and all his seed into the prison and captivity of this earthly, bestial world.

Nothing supernatural came to pass in either case, but Paradise lost and Paradise regained, according to the nature of things, or the real efficacy of

cause to produce its effect.

Thus is your question fully answered: viz. How and why the sufferings and death of Christ enabled Him to be the Author of life to all that died in Adam? Just as the fall of Adam into this world, under the power of sin, death, hell, and the devil, enabled him to be the common father of death, that is, was the natural, unavoidable cause of our being born under the same captivity; just so that life, and sufferings, and death of Christ, which declared His breaking out from them and superiority over them, must, in the nature of the thing, as much enable Him to be the common Author of life, that is, must as certainly be the full, natural, efficacious cause of our inheriting life from Him. Because, by what Christ was in Himself, by what He was in us, by His

whole state, character, and the divine appointment, we all had that natural union with Him, and dependence upon Him, as our Head in the way of redemption, as we had with Adam as our head in the way of our natural birth. So that as it must be said that, because Adam fell, we must, of all necessity, be heirs of his fallen state; so, with the same truth, and from the same necessity of the thing, it must be said that, because Christ our Head is risen victorious out of our fallen state, we, as His members, and having His seed within us, must be, and are made, heirs of all His glory. Because, in all respects, we are as strictly, as intimately connected with and related to Him as the one Redeemer, as we are to Adam as the one father, of all mankind. So that Christ, by His sufferings and death, become in all of us our wisdom, our righteousness, our justification, and redemption, is the same sober and solid truth, as Adam, by his fall, become in all of us our foolishness, our impurity, our corruption, and death.

And now, my friends, look back upon all that has been said, and then tell me, is it possible more to exalt or magnify the infinite merits and availing efficacy of the sufferings and death of Christ, than is done by this doctrine? or whether every thing that is said of them in Scripture is not here proved from the very nature of the thing to be absolutely true? And again, whether it is not sufficiently proved to you that the sufferings and death of Christ are not only consistent

with the doctrine of a God all love, but are the fullest and most absolute proof of it.

Eusebius. - Indeed, Theophilus, you have so fully done for us all that we wanted to have done, that we are now ready to take leave of you. As for my part. I want to return home, to enjoy my Bible, and delight myself with reading it in this comfortable light in which you have set the whole ground and nature of our redemption. I am now in full possession of this glorious truth, that God is mere love, the most glorious truth that can possess and edify the heart of man. It drives every evil out of the soul, and gives life to every spark of goodness that can possibly be kindled in it. Every thing in religion is made amiable, by being a service of love to the God of love.

No sacrifices, sufferings, and death have any place in religion, but to satisfy and fulfil that love of God which could not be satisfied without our salvation. If the Son of God is not spared, if He is delivered up to the rage and malice of men, devils, and hell, it is because, had we not had such a Captain of our salvation, made perfect through sufferings, it never could have been sung, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" It never could have been true that "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so by one man came the resurrection of the dead:" it never could have been said that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Therefore, dear Theophilus, adieu: God is love, and he that hath learnt to live in the spirit of love, hath learnt to live and dwell in God. Love was the beginner of all the works of God, and from eternity to eternity, nothing can come from God but a variety of wonders and works of love over all nature and creature.

Theophilus.—God prosper, Eusebius, this spark of heaven in your soul; may it, like the seraphim's coal taken from the altar, purify your heart from all its uncleanness. But, before you leave me, I beg one more conversation, to be on the practical part of the spirit of love; that so doctrine and practice, hearing and doing, may go hand in hand.

## THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

## Eusebius.

You have shown great good will towards us, Theophilus, in desiring another meeting before we leave you. But yet I seem to myself to have no need of that which you have proposed by this day's conversation. For this doctrine of the spirit of love cannot have more power over me, or be more deeply rooted in me, than it is already. It has so gained and got possession of my whole heart, that every thing else must be under its dominion. I can do nothing else but love; it is my whole nature, I have no

taste for any thing else. Can this matter

be carried higher in practice?

Theophilus .- No higher, Eusebius. And was this the true state of your heart, you would bid fair to leave the world as Elijah did; or, like Enoch, to have it said of you, that you lived wholly to love, and was not. For was there nothing but this divine love alive in you, your fallen flesh and blood would be in danger of being quite burnt up by it. What you have said of yourself, you have spoken in great sincerity, but in a total ignorance of yourself, and the true nature of the spirit of divine love. You are as yet only charmed with the sight, or rather the sound, of it; its real birth is as yet unfelt and unfound in you. Your natural complexion has a great deal of the animal meekness and softness of the lamb and the dove, your blood and spirit are of this turn; and therefore a God all love, and a religion all love, quite transport you; and you are so delighted with it, that you fancy you have nothing in you but this God and religion of love. But, my friend, bear with me, if I tell you that all this is only the good part of the spirit of this bestial world in you, and may be in any unregenerate man that is of your complexion. It is so far from being a genuine fruit of divine love, that, if it be not well looked to, it may prove a real hindrance of it, as it oftentimes does, by its appearing to be that which it is not.

You have quite forgot all that was said in the letter to you on the spirit of love,

that it is a birth in the soul, that can only come forth in its proper time and place, and from its proper causes. Now nothing that is a birth can be taken in or brought into the soul by any notional conception or delightful apprehension of it. You may love it as much as you please, think it the most charming thing in the world fancy every thing but dross and dung in comparison of it, and yet have no more of its birth in you, than the blind man has of that light of which he has got a most charming notion. His blindness still continues the same; he is at the same distance from the light, because light can only be had by a birth of itself in seeing eyes. It is thus with the spirit of love; it is nowhere but where it rises up as a birth.

Eusebius.—But if I am got no farther than this, what good have I from giving in so heartily to all that you have said of this doctrine? And to what end have you taken so much pains to assert and establish it?

Theophilus.—Your error lies in this; you confound two things, which are entirely distinct from each other. You make no difference betwixt the doctrine that only sets forth the nature, excellency, and necessity of the spirit of love, and the spirit of love itself; which yet are two things so different, that you may be quite full of the former, and at the same time quite empty of the latter. I have said every thing that I could to show you the truth, excellency, and necessity of the spirit of love: it is of infinite importance to you to be well established in the belief

of this doctrine. But all that I have said of it is only to induce and encourage you to buy it at its own price, and to give all that for it which alone can purchase it. But if you think (as you plainly do) that you have got it, because you are so highly pleased with that which you have heard of it, you only embrace the shadow, instead of the substance, of that which you ought to have.

Eusebius.-What is the price that I

must give for it?

Theophilus.—You must give up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam; for all that you are and have from him, is that life of flesh and blood which cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Adam, after his fall, had nothing that was good in him, nothing that could inherit an eternal life in heaven, but the bruiser of the serpent, or the seed of the Son of God, that was inspoken into him. Every thing else in him was devoted to death, that this incorruptible seed of the word might grow up into a new name in Christ Jesus.

All the doctrine of God's reprobation and election relates wholly and solely to these two things; viz. the earthly, bestial nature from Adam, and the incorruptible seed of the word, or the Immanuel, in every man.

Nothing is elected, is foreseen, predestinated, or called according to the purpose of God, but this seed of the new man. Because the one eternal, unchangeable purpose of God

towards man is only this, namely, that man should be a heavenly image, or Son of God; and therefore nothing can be elected, or called according to the purpose of God, but this seed of an heavenly birth, because nothing else is able to answer and fulfil the purpose of God; but every thing else that is in man, his whole earthly, bestial nature, is from sin, and is quite contrary to God's purpose in the creation of man.

On the other hand, nothing is reprobated, rejected, or cast out by God, but the earthly nature, which came from the fall of Adam. This is the only vessel of wrath, the son of perdition, that can have no share in the

promises and blessings of God.

Here you have the whole unalterable ground of divine election and reprobation; it relates not to any particular number of people, or division of mankind, but solely to the two natures that are, both of them, without exception, in every individual of mankind. All that is earthly, serpentine, and devilish in every man is reprobated and doomed to destruction; and the heavenly seed of the new birth in every man is that which is chosen, ordained, and called to eternal life.

Election therefore and reprobation, as respecting salvation, equally relate to every man in the world; because every man, as such, hath that in him which only is elected, and that in him which only is reprobated; namely, the earthly nature, and the heavenly seed of the word of God.

Now all this is evident from the very nature of the thing; as soon as you but suppose man at his fall to have a power of redemption, or deliverance from the evil of his fallen nature, engrafted into him, you then have the first unchangeable ground of election and reprobation; you are infallibly shown what it is that God elects and reprobates, and the absolute impossibility of any thing else being reprobated by God but that fallen. evil nature from which he is to be redeemed, or of any thing else being elected by God but that seed of a new birth which is to bring forth his redemption.

Here, therefore, you have a full deliverance from all perplexity upon this matter, and may rest yourself upon this great, comfortable, and most certain truth, that no other election or reprobation, with regard to salvation, ever did or can belong to any one individual son of Adam; but that very same election and reprobation, which both of them happened to, and took place in, Adam's individual person. For all that which was in Adam, both as fallen and redeemed, must, of all necessity, be in every son of Adam; and no man can possibly stand in any other relation to God than Adam did; and therefore cannot have either more or less, or any other divine election and reprobation than Adam had. For, from the moment of man's redemption, which began at the fall, when the incorruptible seed of the word was given into Adam, every

son of Adam, to the end of the world, must come into it, under one and the same election and reprobation with regard to God. Because the whole earthly nature, from which man was to be redeemed, and the seed of the word by which he was to be redeemed, were both of them in every man, one as certainly as the other.

Now this being the inward, essential state of every man born into the world, having in himself all that is elected and all that is reprobated by God; hence it is, that in order to publish the truth and certainty of such election and reprobation, and the truth and certainty of that twofold nature in man on which it is grounded; hence it is that the Spirit of God, in holy Scripture, represents this matter to us by such outward figures as are yet in themselves not figurative, but real proofs of it.

This is, first of all, done under the figures of Cain and Abel, the two first births from Adam, where the one is murdered by the other, hereby demonstrating to us, by this contrariety and difference of these two first births, the inward real state of the father of them, namely, that the same twofold nature was in him that discovered itself in these two first births from him.

The same thing is, age after age, set forth in variety of figures, more especially in Ishmael and Isaac, in Esau and Jacob. And all this, only further to confirm and establish this great truth, viz. that such strife and contrariety as

appeared in the sons of the same father were not only outward representations, but full proofs, of that inward strife and contrariety, which not only existed in their fathers, but universally in every human creature. For Cain and Abel had not come from Adam, but because both their natures were antecedently in him, and in the same state of opposition and contrariety to each other. And as Cain and Abel were no other than the genuine effects of the twofold state which Adam, as fallen and redeemed, was then in; so every man descended from Adam is in himself infallibly all that which Adam was, and has as certainly his own Cain and Abel within himself as Adam had. And, from the beginning to the end of the human race, all that which came to pass so remarkably in the births of Cain and Abel. Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, all that same. some way or other, more or less, comes to pass in every individual of mankind. In one man his own Abel is murdered by his own Cain, and in another, his own Jacob overcomes his own Esau that was born with him.

And all the good or the evil that we bring forth in our lives, is from nothing else but from the strife of these two natures within us, and their victory over one other. Which strife no son of Adam could ever have known any thing of, had not the free grace and mercy of God chosen and called all mankind to a new birth of heaven in and out of their corrupt and fallen souls. No pos-

sible war, or strife of good against evil, could be in fallen man, but by his having from God a seed of life in him, ordained and predestinated to overcome his earthly nature. For that which is put into him by God as the power of his redemption, must be contrary to that from which he is to be redeemed.

And thus a war of good against evil, set up within us by the free grace and mercy of God to us, is the greatest of all demonstrations that there is but one election and but one reprobation, and that all that God rejects and reprobates is nothing else but that corrupt nature which every individual man, Abel as well as Cain, has in himself from Adam as fallen; and that all that God elects, predestinates, calls, justifies, and glorifies is nothing else but that heavenly seed which every individual man, Pharaoh as well as Moses, has in himself from Adam as redeemed.

And thus you have an unerring key to all that is said in Scripture of the election falling upon Abel, Isaac, and Jacob, etc., and of the reprobation falling upon Cain, Ishmael, and Esau, not because God has respect to persons, or that all men did not stand before Him in the same covenant of redemption; but the Scriptures speak thus, that the true nature of God's election and reprobation may thereby be made manifest to the world.

For the earthly nature, which God only reprobates, having broke forth in predominancy in Cain, Ishmael, and Esau, they became proper figures of that which God reprobates, and were used by God as such. And the heavenly seed, which is alone elected to eternal glory, having broke forth in predominancy in Abel, Isaac, Jacob, etc., they became proper figures of that which God only elects, and were used by God as such.

Nothing is here to be understood personally, or according to the flesh of these persons on either side; but all that is said of them is only as they are, figures of the earthly nature and heavenly seed in every man. For nothing is reprobated in Cain, but that very same which is reprobated in Abel, viz. the earthly nature, nor is any thing elected in Jacob but that very same which is equally elected in Esau, viz. the heavenly seed.

And now, gentlemen, you may easily apprehend how and why a God, in whose holy Deity no spark of wrath or partiality can possibly arise, but who is from eternity to eternity only flowing forth in love, goodness, and blessing to every thing capable of it, could yet say of the children before they were born or had done either good or evil, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." It is because Esau signifies the earthly, bestial nature that came from sin; and Jacob signifies the incorruptible seed of the word, that is to overcome Esau, and change his mortal into immortality.

But now I stop, for you may perhaps think that I have here made a digression from our proposed subject. Eusebius.—A digression you may call it if you please, Theophilus, but it is such a digression as has entirely prevented my ever having one more anxious thought about God's decrees of election and reprobation.

The matter stands now in open daylight, notwithstanding that thickness of learned darkness under which it has been hidden from the time of St. Austin to this day. And now, sir, proceed as you please to lay open all my defects, in the spirit of love; for I am earnestly desirous of being set right in so important a matter.

Theogenes.—Let me first observe to Theophilus, that I am afraid the matter is much worse with me than it is with you. For though this doctrine seems to have got all my heart, as it is a doctrine; yet I am continually thrown out of it in practice, and find myself as daily under the power of my old tempers and passions as I was before I was so full of this doctrine.

Theophilus.—You are to know, my friends, that every kind of virtue and goodness may be brought into us by two different ways. They may be taught us outwardly by men, by rules and precepts; and they may be inwardly born in us, as the genuine birth of our own renewed spirit. In the former way, as we learn them only from men, by rules and documents of instruction, they at best only change our outward behaviour, and leave our heart in its natural state, and only put our passions under a forced restraint,

which will occasionally break forth in spite of the dead letter of precept and doctrine. Now this way of learning and attaining goodness, though thus imperfect, is yet absolutely necessary in the nature of the thing, and must first have its time, and place, and work in us, yet it is only for a time, as the law was a schoolmaster to the gospel. We must first be babes in doctrine, as well as in strength, before we can be men. But of all this outward instruction, whether from good men or the letter of Scripture, it must be said, as the apostle saith of the law, that "it maketh nothing perfect;" and yet is highly necessary in order to perfection.

The true perfection and profitableness of the holy written word of God is fully set forth by St. Paul to Timothy; "From a child (saith he) thou hast known the Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, which is by faith in Christ Jesus." Now these Scriptures were the law and the prophets, for Timothy had known no other from his youth. And as they, so all other Scriptures since have no other good or benefit in them but as they lead and direct us to a salvation that is not to be had in themselves, but from faith in Christ Jesus. Their teaching is only to teach us where to seek and to find the fountain and source of all light and knowledge.

Of the law, saith the apostle, "it was a schoolmaster to Christ;" of the prophets, he saith the same. "Ye have

(says he) a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that ye take heed. as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star ariseth in your hearts." The same thing is to be affirmed of the letter of the New Testament; it is but our schoolmaster unto Christ, a light like that of prophecy, to which we are to take great heed, until Christ, as the dawning of the day, or the day star, ariseth in our hearts. Nor can the thing possibly be otherwise; no instruction that comes under the form of words can do more for us than sounds and words can do; they can only direct us to something that is better than themselves, that can be the true light, life, spirit, and power of holiness in us.

Eusebius.—I cannot deny what you say, and yet it seems to me to derogate

from Scripture.

Theophilus.-Would you then have me to say that the written word of God is that word of God which liveth and abideth for ever; that word which is the wisdom and power of God; that word which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made; that word of God which was made flesh for the redemption of the world: that word of God, of which we must be born again; that word which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" that word which in Christ Jesus "is become wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification in us;" would you have me say that all this is to be understood of the written word of God? But if this cannot possibly be, then all that I have said is granted, namely, that Jesus is alone that Word of God that can be the light, life, and salvation of fallen man. Or how is it possible more to exalt the letter of Scripture, than by owning it to be a true, outward, verbal direction to the one only true light and salvation of man.

Suppose you had been a true disciple of John the Baptist, whose only office was to prepare the way to Christ, how could you have more magnified his office, or declared your fidelity to him, than by going from his teaching to be taught by that Christ to whom he directed you? The Baptist was, indeed, a "burning and a shining light," and so are the holy Scriptures; but "he was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

What a folly would it be to say that you had undervalued the office and character of John the Baptist, because he was not allowed to be the light itself, but only a true witness of it, and guide to it? Now if you can show that the written word in the Bible can have any other or higher office or power than such a ministerial one as the Baptist had, I am ready to hear you.

Eusebius.—There is no possibility of doing that.

Theophilus.—But if that is not possible to be done, then you are come to the full proof of this point, viz. that there are two ways of attaining knowledge, goodness, virtue, etc., the one by the ministry of

outward, verbal instruction, either by men or books, and the other by an inward birth of divine light, goodness, and virtue in our own renewed spirit; and that the former is only in order to the latter, and of no benefit to us, but as it carries us farther than itself, to be united in heart and spirit with the light, and word, and Spirit of God. Just as the Baptist had been of no benefit to his disciples, unless he had been their guide from himself to Christ.

But to come now closer to our subject in hand.

From this twofold light or teaching there necessarily arises a twofold state of virtue and goodness. For such as the teacher or teaching is, such is the state and manner of the goodness that can be had from it. Every effect must be according to the cause that produces it. If you learn virtue and goodness only from outward means, from men or books. you may be virtuous and good according to time, and place, and outward forms; you may do works of humility. works of love and benevolence, use times and forms of prayer; all this virtue and goodness is suitable to this kind of teaching, and may very well be had from it. But the spirit of prayer, the spirit of love, and the spirit of humility, or of any other virtue, are only to be attained by the operation of the light and Spirit of God, not outwardly teaching, but inwardly bringing forth a new-born spirit within us.

And now, let me tell you both that it

is much to be feared that you as yet stand only under this outward teaching; your good works are only done under obedience to such rules, precepts, and doctrines as your reason assents to, but are not the fruits of a new-born spirit within you. But till you are thus renewed in the spirit of your minds, your virtues are only taught practices, and grafted upon a corrupt bottom. Every thing you do will be a mixture of good and bad; your humility will help you to pride, your charity to others will give nourishment to your own self-love, and as your prayers increase, so will the opinion of your own sanctity. Because till the heart is purified to the bottom, and has felt the axe at the root of its evil (which cannot be done by outward instruction), every thing that proceeds from it partakes of its impurity and corruption.

Now that Theogenes is only under the law, or outward instruction, is too plain from the complaint that he made of himself. For notwithstanding his progress in the doctrine of love, he finds all the passions of his corrupt nature still alive in him, and himself only altered in doc-

trine and opinion.

The same may be well suspected of you, Eusebius, who are so mistaken in the spirit of love that you fancy yourself to be wholly possessed of it, from no other ground but because you embrace it, as it were, with open arms, and think of nothing but living under the power of it. Whereas, if the spirit of love was really born in you from its own seed, you would

account for its birth and power in you in quite another manner than you have here done; you would have known the price that you had paid for it, and how many deaths you had suffered, before the spirit of love came to life in you.

Eusebius.—But surely, sir, imperfect as our virtues are, we may yet, I hope, be truly said to be in a state of grace; and if so, we are under something more than mere outward instruction. Besides, you very well know that it is a principle with both of us to expect all our goodness from the Spirit of God dwelling and working in us. We live in faith and hope of the divine operation; and therefore I must needs say that your censure upon us seems to be more severe than just.

Theophilus.-Dear Eusebius, I censure neither of you, nor have I said one word by way of accusation. So far from it, that I love and approve the state you are both in. It is good and happy for Theogenes, that he feels and confesses that his natural tempers are not yet subdued by doctrine and precept. good and happy for you also, that you are so highly delighted with the doctrine of love, for by this means each of you have your true preparation for further advancement. And though your state has this difference, yet the same error was common to both of you. You both of you thought you had as much of the spirit of love as you could or ought to have: and therefore Theogenes wondered he had no more benefit from it: and you

wondered that I should desire to lead you farther into it. And therefore, to deliver you from this error, I have desired this conference upon the practical ground of the spirit of love, that you may neither of you lose the benefit of that good state in which you stand.

Eusebius .- Pray therefore proceed as you please. For we have nothing so much at heart as to have the truth and purity of this divine love brought forth in us. For as it is the highest perfection that I adore in God, so I can neither wish nor desire any thing for myself, but to be totally governed by it. I could as willingly consent to lose all my being, as to find the power of love lost in my soul. Neither doctrine, nor mystery, nor precept has any delight for me, but as it calls forth the birth, and growth, and exercise of that Spirit, which doth all that it doth, towards God and man, under the one law of love. Whatever, therefore, you can say to me, either to increase the power, manifest the defects, or remove the impediments of divine love in my soul, will be heartily welcome to me.

Theophilus.—I apprehend that you do not yet know what divine love is in itself, nor what is its nature and power in the soul of man. For divine love is perfect peace and joy, it is a freedom from all disquiet, it is all content and mere happiness; and makes every thing to rejoice in itself. Love is the Christ of God; wherever it comes, it comes as the blessing and happiness of every natural

life, as the restorer of every lost perfection, a redeemer from all evil, a fulfiller of all righteousness, and a peace of God which passeth all understanding. Through all the universe of things. nothing is uneasy, unsatisfied, or restless, but because it is not governed by love, or because its nature has not reached or attained the full birth of the spirit of love. For when that is done, every hunger is satisfied, and all complaining, murmuring, accusing, resenting, revenging, and striving, are as totally suppressed and overcome, as the coldness, thickness, and horror of darkness are suppressed and overcome by the breaking forth of the light. If you ask why the spirit of love cannot be displeased, cannot be disappointed. cannot complain, accuse, resent, or murmur, it is because divine love desires nothing but itself; it is its own good, it has all when it has itself, because nothing is good but itself and its own working; for love is God; "and he that dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love:" tell me now, Eusebius, are you thus blessed in the spirit of love?

Eusebius.—Would you have me tell you that I am an angel, and without the infirmities of human flesh and blood?

Theophilus.—No; but I would have you judge of your state of love by these angelical tempers, and not by any fervour or heat that you find in yourself. For just so much and so far as you are freed from the folly of all earthly affections, from all disquiet, trouble, and complaint

about this, or that, just so much and so far is the spirit of love come to life in you. For divine love is a new life and new nature, and introduces you into a new world; it puts an end to all your former opinions, notions, and tempers: it opens new senses in you, and makes you see high to be low, and low to be high; wisdom to be foolishness, and foolishness wisdom; it makes prosperity and adversity, praise and dispraise, to be equally nothing. "When I was a child (saith the apostle), I thought as a child, I spake as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Whilst man is under the power of nature, governed only by worldly wisdom, his life (however old he may be) is quite childish; every thing about him only awakens childish thoughts and pursuits in him; all that he sees and hears, all that he desires or fears, likes, or dislikes; that which he gets, and that which he loses; that which he hath, and that which he hath not, serve only to carry him from this fiction of evil to that fiction of good, from one vanity of peace to another vanity of trouble. But when divine love is born in the soul, all childish images of good and evil are done away, and all the sensibility of them is lost, as the stars lose their visibility when the sun is risen.

Theogenes.—That this is the true power of the spirit of divine love, I am fully convinced from my own uneasiness at finding that my natural tempers are not overcome by it. For whence could I

have this trouble, but because that little dawning that I have of the spirit of love in me maketh just demands to be the one light, breath, and power of my life, and to have all that is within me overcome and governed by it. And therefore, I find, I must either silence this small voice of new risen love within me, or have no rest from complaints and self-condemnation, till my whole nature is brought into subjection to it.

Theophilus.-Most rightly judged, Theogenes; and now we are fairly brought to the one great practical point, on which all our proficiency in the spirit of love entirely depends. Namely, that all that we are, and all that we have from Adam, as fallen, must be given up, absolutely denied and resisted, if the birth of divine love is to be brought forth in us. For all that we are by nature is in full contrariety to this divine love, nor can it be otherwise; a death to itself is its only cure, and nothing else can make it subservient to good; just as darkness cannot be altered, or made better in itself, or transmuted into light, it can only be subservient to the light by being lost in it and swallowed up by it.

Now this was the first state of man; all the natural properties of his creaturely life were hid in God, united in God, and glorified by the life of God manifested in them; just as the nature and qualities of darkness are lost and hid, when enlightened and glorified by the light. But when man fell from or died to the divine

life, all the natural properties of his creaturely life, having lost their union in and with God, broke forth in their own natural division, contrariety, and war against one another; just as the darkness, when it has lost the light, must show forth its own coldness, horror, and other uncomfortable qualities. And as darkness, though in the utmost contrariety to light, is yet absolutely necessary to it, and without which no manifestation or visibility of light could possibly be; so it is with the natural properties of he creaturely life; they are in themselves all contrariety to the divine life, and yet the divine life cannot be communicated but in them and by them.

Eusebius.—I never read or heard of the darkness being necessary to light; it has been generally considered as a negative thing, that was nothing in itself, and only signified an absence of light; but your doctrine not only supposes darkness to be something positive, that hath a strength and substantiality in itself, but also to be antecedent to the light, because necessary to bring it into manifestation. I am almost afraid to hear more of this doctrine; it sounds harsh to my ears.

Theophilus.—Don't be frighted, Eusebius. I will lead you into no doctrine but what is strictly conformable to the letter of Scripture and the most orthodox piety. The scripture saith, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" therefore the scripture affirmeth

light to be superior, absolutely separate from, and eternally antecedent to darkness; and so do I. In this scripture you have a noble and true account of light; what it is, where it is, and was, and always must be. It can never change its state or place, be altered in itself, be anywhere, or in another manner, than as it was, and will be, from and to all eternity. When God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," no change happened to eternal light itself, nor did any light then begin to be; but the darkness of this world then only began to receive a power or operation of the eternal light upon it, which it had not before; or eternity then began to open some resemblance of its own glory in the dark elements and shadows of time. And thus it is that I assert the priority and glory of light, and put all darkness under its feet, as impossible to be any thing else but its footstool.

Eusebius.—I am quite delighted with this. But tell me now how it is that light can only be manifested in and by darkness.

Theophilus.—The scripture saith that "God dwelleth in the light, to which no man can approach:" therefore the scripture teacheth that light in itself is and must be invisible to man; that it cannot be approached or made manifest to him but in and by something that is not light. And this is all that I said, and the very same thing that I said, when I affirmed that light cannot be manifested, or have any visibility to created

eyes, but in, and through, and by the darkness.

Light as it is in itself is only in the supernatural Deity; and that is the reason why no man or any created being can approach to it, or have any sensibility of it, as it is in itself. And yet no light can come into this world but that in which God dwelt before any world was created. No light can be in time, but that which was the light of eternity. If therefore the supernatural light is to manifest something of its incomprehensible glory, and make itself, in some degree, sensible and visible to the creature, this supernatural light must enter into nature, it must put on materiality. Now darkness is the one only materiality of light, in and through which it can become the object of creaturely eyes: and till there is darkness, there is no possible medium or power through which the supernatural light can manifest something of itself, or have any of its glory visible to created eyes. And the reason why darkness can only be the materiality of light is this, it is because darkness is the one only ground of all nature and of all materiality; whether in heaven or on earth. And therefore every thing that is creaturely in nature. that has any form, figure, or substance, from the highest angel in heaven to the lowest thing upon earth, hath all that it hath of figure, form, or substantiality only and solely from darkness. Look at the glittering glory of the diamond, and then you see the one medium through

which the glory of the incomprehensible light can make some discovery or manifestation of itself. It matters not whether you consider heaven or earth, eternal or temporal nature, nothing in either state can be capable of visible glory, brightness, or illumination, but that which standeth in the state of the diamond, and has its own thickness of darkness. And if the universe of eternal and temporal nature is everywhere light, it is because it has darkness everywhere for its dwelling-place. Light, you know, is, by variety of modern experiments, declared to be material; the experiments are not to be disputed. And yet all these experiments are only so many proofs, not of the materiality of light, but of our doctrine, viz. that materiality is always along with visible light, and also that light can only open and display something of itself in and by darkness, as its body of manifestation and visibility. But light cannot possibly be material, because all materiality, as such, be it what and where it will, is nothing else but so much darkness. And, therefore, to suppose light to ibe material is the same absurdity as to suppose it to be darkness; for so much materiality is so much darkness; and it is impossible to be otherwise. Again, all matter has but one nature; it admits of neither more nor less, but whether it is, all that is material is equally there. If, therefore, light was material, all the materiality in the world must be light, and equally so. For no materiality could be light, unless light was essential to matter, as such, no more than any materiality could be extended, unless extension was essential to matter, as such.

Eusebius.—What is it, then, that you understand by the materiality of light?

Theophilus.—No more than I understand by the materiality of the wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God, when they are made intelligible and credible to me by the materiality of paper and ink, etc. For light is as distinct from, and superior to, all that materiality in and by which it gives forth some visibility of itself; as the wisdom, mercy, and goodness of God are distinct from, and superior to, all that written materiality in and through which they are made, in some degree, intelligible and credible to human minds.

The incomprehensible Deity can make no outward revelation of His will, wisdom, and goodness, but by articulate sounds, voices, or letters written on tables of stone, or such-like materiality. Just so, the invisible, inaccessible, supernatural light can make no outward visibility of itself, but through such darkness of materiality as is capable of receiving its illumination. But as the divine will, wisdom, and goodness, when making outward revelation of themselves by the materiality of things, are not therefore material, so neither is the light material, when it outwardly reveals something of its invisible, incomprehensible splendour and glory by and through the materiality of darkness.

All light, then, that is natural and visible to the creature, whether in heaven or on earth, is nothing else but so much darkness illuminated; and that which is called the materiality of light is only the materiality of darkness, in which the light incorporateth itself.

For light can be only that same invisible, unapproachable thing which it always was in God, from all eternity. And that which is called the difference of light, is only the difference of that darkness through which the light gives forth different manifestations of itself. It is the same, whether it illuminates the air, water, a diamond, or any other materiality of darkness. It has no more materiality in itself, when it enlightens the earth, than when it enlightens the mind of an angel; when it gives colour to bodies, than when it gives understanding to spirits.

Sight and visibility is but one power of light, but light is all power; it is life, and every joyful sensibility of life is from it. "In Him (says the apostle), was light, and the light was the life of men." Light is all things, and nothing. It is nothing, because it is supernatural: it is all things, because every good power and perfection of every thing is from it. No joy or rejoicing in any creature, but from the power and joy of light. No meekness, benevolence, or goodness, in angel, man, or any creature, but where light is the lord of its life. Life itself begins no sooner, rises no higher, has no other glory, than as the light begins it and leads it on. Sounds have no softness, flowers and gums have no sweetness, plants and fruits have no growth, but as the mystery of light opens itself in them.

Whatever is delightful and ravishing, sublime and glorious, in spirits, minds, or bodies, either in heaven or on earth, is from the power of the supernatural light, opening its endless wonders in them. Hell has no misery, horror, or distraction, but because it has no communication with the supernatural light. And did not the supernatural light stream forth its blessings into this world, through the materiality of the sun, all outward nature would be full of the horror of hell.

And hence are all the mysteries and wonders of light, in this material system, so astonishingly great and unsearchable; it is because the natural light of this world is nothing else but the power and mystery of the supernatural light, breaking forth and opening itself, according to its omnipotence, in all the various forms of elementary darkness which constitute this temporary world.

Theogenes.—I could willingly hear you, Theophilus, on this subject till midnight, though it seems to lead us away from our

proposed subject.

Theophilus.—Not so far out of the way, Theogenes, as you may imagine; for darkness and light are the two natures that are in every man, and do all that is done in him.

The Scriptures, you know, make only this division, the works of darkness are sin, and they who walk in the light are the children of God. Therefore light and darkness do every thing, whether good or evil, that is done in man.

Theogenes.—What is this darkness in

itself, or where is it?

Theophilus.- It is everywhere, where there is nature and creature. For all nature, and all that is natural in the creature, is in itself nothing else but darkness, whether it be in soul or body, in heaven or on earth. And therefore, when the angels (though in heaven) had lost the supernatural light, the became imprisoned in the chains of their own natural darkness. If you ask why nature must be darkness, it is because nature is not God, and therefore can have no light, as it is nature. For God and light are as inseparable, as God and unity are inseparable. Every thing, therefore, that is not God, is and can be nothing else in itself but darkness: and can do nothing but in, and under, and according to the nature and powers of darkness.

Theogenes.—What are the powers of darkness?

Theophilus.—The powers of darkness are the workings of nature or self: for nature, darkness, and self are but three different expressions for one and the same thing.

Now every evil, wicked, wrathful, impure, unjust thought, temper, passion, or imagination, that ever stirred or moved in any creature; every misery, discontent, distress, rage, horror, and torment

that ever plagued the life of fallen man or angel, are the very things that you are to understand by the powers or workings of darkness, nature, or self. For nothing is evil, wicked, or tormenting but that which nature or self doth.

Theogenes.—But if nature is thus the seat and source of all evil, if every thing that is bad is in it and from it, how can such a nature be brought forth by a God

who is all goodness?

Theophilus .- Nature has all evil, and no evil, in itself. Nature, as it comes forth from God, is darkness without any evil of darkness in it; for it is not darkness without or separate from light, nor could it ever have been known to have any quality of darkness in it, had it not lost that state of light in which it came forth from God, only as a manifestation of the goodness, virtues, and glories of light. Again, it is nature, viz. a strife and contrariety of properties for this only end, that the supernatural good might thereby come into sensibility, be known, found, and felt, by its taking all the evil of strife and contrariety from them, and becoming the union, peace, and joy of them all. Nor could the evil of strife and contrariety of will ever have had a name in all the universe of nature and creature, had it all continued in that state in which it came forth from God. Lastly, it is self, viz. an own life, that so, through such an own life, the universal, incomprehensible goodness, happiness, and perfections of the Deity might be possessed as properties and qualities of an own life in creaturely finite beings.

And thus, all that is called nature, darkness, or self has not only no evil in it, but is the only true ground

of all possible good.

But when the intelligent creature turns from God to self, or nature, he acts unnaturally, he turns from all that which makes nature to be good; he finds nature only as it is in itself, and without God. And then it is that nature, or self, hath all evil in it. Nothing is to be had from it, or found in it, but the work and working of every kind of evil, baseness, misery, and torment, and the utmost contrariety to God and all goodness. And thus, also, you see the plainness and certainty of our assertion, that nature, or self, hath all evil, and no evil, in it.

Theogenes.—I plainly enough perceive that nature, or self, without God manifested in it, is all evil and misery. But I would, if I could, more perfectly understand the precise nature of self, or what it is that makes it to be so full of evil and

misery.

Theophilus.—Covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath are the four elements of self, or nature, or hell, all of them inseparable from it. And the reason why it must be thus, and cannot be otherwise, is because the natural life of the creature is brought forth for the participation of some high, supernatural good in the Creator. But it could have no fitness or possible capacity to receive such good, unless it was in itself both an

extremity of want and an extremity of desire of some high good. When, therefore, this natural life is deprived of or fallen from God, it can be nothing else in itself but an extremity of want continually desiring, and an extremity of desire continually wanting. And hence it is that its whole life can be nothing else but a plague and torment of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath, all which is precisely nature, self, or hell.

Now covetousness, pride, and envy are not three different things, but only three different names for the restless workings of one and the same will or desire, which, as it differently torments itself, takes these different names, for nothing is in any of them but the working of a restless desire; and all this because the natural life of the creature can do nothing else but work as a desire. And therefore, when fallen from God, its three first births, and which are quite inseparable from it, are covetousness, envy, and pride; it must covet, because it is a desire proceeding from want: it must envy, because it is a desire turned to self: it must assume and arrogate. because it is a desire founded on a real want of exaltation, or a higher state.

Now wrath, which is a fourth birth from these three, can have no existence till some or all of these three are contradicted, or have something done to them that is contrary to their will; and then it is that wrath is necessarily born, and not till then.

And thus you see, in the highest degree

of certainty, what nature or self is as to its essential constituent parts. It is the three forementioned, inseparable properties of a desire, thrown into a fourth of wrath that can never cease, because their will can never be gratified. For these four properties generate one another, and therefore generate their own torment. They have no outward cause nor any inward power of altering themselves. And, therefore, all self, or nature, must be in this state till some supernatural good comes into it, or gets a birth in it. And, therefore, every pain or disorder in the mind or body of any intelligent creature is an undeniable proof that it is in a fallen state, and has lost that supernatural good for which it was created. So certain a truth is the fallen state of all mankind. And here lies the absolute, indispensable necessity of the one Christian redemption. fallen man is born again from above, till such a supernatural birth is brought forth in him, by the eternal word and Spirit of God, he can have no possible escape or deliverance from these four elements of self or hell.

Whilst man, indeed, lives amongst the vanities of time, his covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath may be in a tolerable state, may help him to a mixture of peace and trouble; they may have at times their gratifications as well as their torments. But when death has put an end to the vanity of all earthly cheats, the soul that is not born again of the supernatural word and Spirit of

God must find itself unavoidably devoured or shut up in its own insatiable, unchangeable, self-tormenting covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath. Oh, Theogenes, that I had power from God to take those dreadful scales from the eyes of every deist, which hinder him from seeing and feeling the infinite importance of this most certain truth!

Theogenes.— God give a blessing, Theophilus, to your good prayer. And then let me tell you that you have quite satisfied my question about the nature of self. I shall never forget it, nor can I ever possibly have any doubt of the truth of it.

Theophilus.- Let me, however, go a little deeper in the matter. All life, and all sensibility of life, is a desire; and nothing can feel or find itself to exist, but as it finds itself to have and be a desire: and therefore all nature is a desire; and all that nature does, or works, is done by the working of desire. And this is the reason why all nature and the natural life of every creature is a state of want, and therefore must be a state of misery and selftorment so long as it is mere nature, or left to itself. For every desire, as such, is and must be made up of contrariety, as is sufficiently shown elsewhere.\* And its essential contrariety. which it has, in itself, is the one only possible beginning or ground of its sensibility. For nothing can be felt, but because of its contrariety to that

<sup>\*&</sup>quot; Way to Divine Knowledge," p. 199, etc. "Spirit of Prayer," App. p. 121, etc.

which feels. And therefore no creaturely desire can be brought into existence, or have any possible sensibility of itself, but because desire, as such, is unavoidably made up of that contrariety whence comes all feeling, and felt.

Again, All natural life is nothing else but a mere desire founded in want; now want is contrary to desire; and therefore every natural life, as such, is in a state of contrariety and torment to itself. It can do nothing but work in and feel its own contrariety, and so be its own unavoidable, incessant tormentor.

Hence we may plainly see that God's bringing a sensible creature into existence is His bringing the power of desire into a creaturely state; and the power and extent of its own working desire is the bounds or limits of its own creaturely nature. And therefore every intelligent creature, of whatever rank in the creation, is and can be nothing else in its creaturely or natural state but a state of want; and the higher its natural state is supposed to be, the higher is its want and the greater its torment, if left only in its natural state. And this is the reason of the excessive misery and depravity of the fallen angels.

Now the contrariety that is in desire, and must be in it, because it is a desire, and the only ground of all sensibility, is plainly shown you by the most undeniable appearance in outward or material nature. All that is done in outward nature is done by the working of attraction. And all attraction is

nothing else but an inseparable combination and incessant working of three contrary properties, or laws of motion. It draws, it resists its own drawing; and from this drawing and resisting, which are necessarily equal to one another, it becomes an orbicular or whirling motion, and yet draws and resists, just as it did before.

Now this threefold contrariety in the motions or properties of attraction, and by which all the elements of this material world are held and governed, and made to bring forth all the wonders in all kinds of animate and inanimate things; this contrariety, being the only possible ground of all material nature, is a full demonstration—(1) That contrariety is the one only possible ground of nature and all natural life, whether it be eternal or temporal, spiritual or material. (2) That no other contrariety is or can be in the properties or laws of attraction in this material nature, but that one and the same contrariety which was from eternity in spiritual nature, is inseparable from it, and can be nowhere but in it. For time can only partake of eternity, it can have nothing in it but the working of eternity, nor be any thing but what it is by the working of eternity in it. It can have nothing that is its own, or peculiar to it, but its transitory state, and form, and nature. It is a mere accident, has only an occasional existence, and whatever is seen or done in it is only so much of the working of eternity seen and done in it.

For attraction in the material world has not only nothing material in it, but is impossible to be communicated to matter, or rather matter has no possible capacity to receive attraction. It can no more receive or obey the laws of attraction, than it can make laws for angels. It is as incapable of moving or stirring itself, as it is of making syllogisms. For matter is, in itself, only death, darkness, and inactivity, and is as utterly incapable of moving itself as it is of illuminating or creating itself; nothing can be done in it, and by it, but that which is done by something that is not material.

Therefore, that which is called the attraction of materiality is, in itself, nothing else but the working of the spiritual properties of desire, which has in itself those very three inseparable contrarieties which make the three contrarieties in the motions of attraction. Material nature, being an accidental, temporary, transitory out-birth from eternal nature, and having no power of existing but under it and in dependence upon it; the spiritual properties of eternal nature do, as it were, materialise themselves for a time, in their temporary out-birth, and force matter to work as they work, and to have the same contradictory motions in it which are essential to eternal nature.

And thus the three inseparable, contrary motions of matter are, in the same manner and for the same reason,

a true ground of a material nature in time, as the three inseparable, contrary, contradictory workings of desire are a true ground of a spiritual nature in eternity. And you are to observe that all that is done in matter and time, is done by the same agents, or spiritual properties, which do all that is naturally done in eternity, in heaven, or in hell. For nothing is the ground of happiness and glory in heaven, nothing is the ground of misery, woe, and distraction in hell, but the working of the same contrary properties of desire, which work contrariety in the attraction of matter, and bring forth all the changes of life and death in this material system. They are unchangeable in their nature, and are everywhere the same; they are as spiritual in hell and on earth as they are in heaven. Considered as in themselves, they are everywhere equally good and equally bad; because they are everywhere equally the ground, and only the ground, for either happiness or misery. No possible happiness or sensibility of joy for any creature, but where these contrary properties work, nor any possibility of misery but from them.

Now attraction, acting according to its three invariable, inseparable contrarieties of motion, stands in this material nature exactly in the same place, and for the same end, and doing the same office, as the three first properties of desire do in eternal or spiritual nature. For they can be or do nothing with regard to earth and time, but that

same which they are and do in heaven and eternity.

In eternal nature, the three contrary properties of desire, answering exactly to the three contrary motions of material attraction, are, in themselves, only resistance, rage, and darkness, and can be nothing else, till the supernatural Deity kindles its fire of light and love in them; and then all their raging contrarieties are changed into never-ceasing sensibilities of unity, joy, and happiness.

Just so, in this material system, suppose there to be nothing in it but the contrary motions of attraction, it could be nothing else but rage against rage in the horror of darkness.

But when the same supernatural light, which turns the first fighting properties of nature into a kingdom of heaven, gives forth something of its goodness into this world, through the kindled body of the sun, then all the fighting, contradictory motions of attraction serve only to bring new joys into the world, and open every life, and every blessing of life, that can have birth in a system of transitory matter.

Theogenes.—Oh, Theophilus, you quite surprise me by thus showing me, with so much certainty, how the powers of eternity work in the things of time. Nothing is done on earth but by the unchangeable workings of the same spiritual powers, which work after the same manner both in heaven and in hell. I now sufficiently see how man stands in

the midst of heaven and hell, under an absolute necessity of belonging wholly to the one or wholly to the other, as soon as this cover of materiality is taken off from him.

For matter is his only wall of partition between them, he is equally nigh to both of them; and as light and love make all the difference there is between heaven and hell, so nothing but a birth of light and love in the properties of his soul can possibly keep hell out of it, or bring heaven into it.

I now also see the full truth and certainty of what you said of the nature and power of divine love; viz. "that it is perfect peace and joy, a freedom from all disquiet, making every thing to rejoice in itself. That it is the Christ of God, and wherever it comes, it comes as the blessing and happiness of every natural life; as the restorer of every lost perfection; a redeemer from all evil; a fulfiller of all righteousness; and a peace of God which passes all understanding." So that I am now a thousand times more than ever athirst after the spirit of love. I am willing to sell all, and buy it; its blessing is so great, and the want of it so dreadful a state, that I am even afraid of lying down in my bed, till every working power of my soul is given up to it, wholly possessed and governed by it.

Theophilus.—You have reason for all that you say, Theogenes, for were we truly affected with things as they are our real good, or real evil, we should be

much more afraid of having the serpents of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath well nourished and kept alive within us, than of being shut up in a pest-house, or cast into a dungeon of venomous beasts. On the other hand, we should look upon the lofty eloquence and proud virtue of a Cicero but as the blessing of storm and tempest, when compared with the heavenly tranquillity of that meek and lowly heart to which our Redeemer has called us.

I said the serpents of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath, because they are alone the real, dreadful, original serpents; and all earthly serpents are but transitory, partial, and weak out-births of them. All evil, earthly beasts are but short-lived images or creaturely eruptions of that hellish disorder that is broke out from the fallen spiritual world; and by their manifold variety, they show us that multiplicity of evil that lies in the womb of that abyss of dark rage which (N.B.) has no maker, but the three first properties of nature, fallen from God and working in their own darkness.

So that all evil, mischievous, ravenous, venomous beasts, though they have no life but what begins in and from this material world, and totally ends at the death of their bodies, yet have they no malignity in their earthly, temporary nature, but from those same wrathful properties of fallen nature, which live and work in our eternal fallen souls. And, therefore, though they are as different from us as time from eternity, yet,

wherever we see them, we see so many infallible proofs of the fall of nature and the reality of hell. For, was there no hell broke out in spiritual nature, not only no evil beast, but no bestial life, could ever have come into existence.

For the origin of matter, and the bestial, earthly life, stands thus. When the fall of angels had made their dwelling-place to be a dark chaos, of the first properties of nature, left to themselves, the infinite wisdom and goodness of God created or compacted this spiritual chaos into a material heaven and a material earth, and commanded the light to enter into it. Hence this chaos became the ground or the materiality of a new and temporary nature, in which the heavenly power of light, and the properties of darkness, each of them materialised, could work together, carrying on a war of heaven against earth; so that all the evil workings of fallen spiritual nature, and all the good that was to overcome it, might be equally manifested both by the good and bad state of outward nature, and by that variety of good and bad living creatures that sprung up out of it. To stand in this state, viz. of a spiritual chaos changed into a materiality of light, striving against darkness, till the omnipotent wisdom and goodness of God, through the wonders of a first and second Adam, had made this chaotic earth to send as many angels into the highest heaven, as fell with Lucifer into the hellish chaos.

But to return. I have, I hope, sufficiently opened unto you the malignant nature of that self which dwells in and makes up the working life of every creature that has lost its right state in God—viz. that all the evil that was in the first chaos of darkness, or that still is in hell and devils, all the evil that is in material nature and material creatures, whether animate or inanimate, is nothing else, works in and with nothing else, but those first properties of nature, which drive on the life of fallen man in covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath.

Theogenes.-I could almost say that you have shown me more than enough of this monster of self, though I would not be without this knowledge of it for half the world. But now, sir, what must I do to be saved from the mouth of this lion. for he is the depth of all subtlety, the satan, that deceiveth the whole world. He can hide himself under all forms of goodness, he can watch and fast, write and instruct, pray much and preach long, give alms to the poor, visit the sick, and yet often gets more life and strength, and a more unmoveable abode, in these forms of virtue, than he has in publicans and sinners.

Enjoin me, therefore, whatever you please, all rules, methods, and practices will be welcome to me, if you judge them to be necessary in this matter.

Theophilus.—There is no need of a number of practices or methods in this matter. For to die to self, or to come from under its power, is not, cannot be done by any active resistance we can make to it by the powers of nature. For nature can no more overcome or suppress itself, than wrath can heal wrath. So long as nature acts, nothing but natural works are brought forth, and therefore the more labour of this kind, the more nature is fed and strengthened with its own food.

But the one true way of dying to self is most simple and plain, it wants no arts or methods, no cells, monasteries, or pilgrimages, it is equally practicable by every body, it is always at hand, it meets you in every thing, it is free from all deceit, and is never without success.

It you ask what this one, true, simple, plain, immediate, and unerring way is; it is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. This is the truth and perfection of dying to self; it is nowhere else, nor possible to be in any thing else, but in this state of heart.

Theogenes.—The excellency and perfection of these virtues I readily acknowledge; but alas, sir, how will this prove the way of overcoming self to be so simple, plain, immediate, and unerring as you speak of? For is it not the doctrine of almost all men and all books, and confirmed by our own woeful experience, that much length of time, and exercise, and variety of practices and methods are necessary, and scarce sufficient to the attainment of any one of these four virtues?

Theophilus .- When Christ our Saviour

was upon earth, was there any thing more simple, plain, immediate, unerring than the way to Him? Did scribes, Pharisees, publicans, and sinners want any length of time or exercise of rules and methods before they could have admission to Him, or have the benefit of faith in Him?

Theogenes.—I don't understand why you put this question, nor do I see how it can possibly relate to the matter before us.

Theophilus .- It not only relates to, but is the very heart and truth of, the matter before us; it is not appealed to by way of illustration of our subject, but it is our subject itself, only set in a truer and stronger light. For when I refer you to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God as the one simple, plain, immediate, and unerring way of dying to self, or being saved from it; I call it so for no other reason but because you can as easily and immediately, without art or method, by the mere turning and faith of your mind, have all the benefit of these virtues, as publicans and sinners, by their turning to Christ, could be helped and saved by Him.

Theogenes.—But, good sir, would you have me then believe that my turning and giving up myself to these virtues is as certain and immediate a way of my being directly possessed and blessed by their good power, as when sinners turned to Christ to be helped and saved by Him. Surely this is too short a way, and has too much of miracle in it, to be now expected.

Theophilus.—I would have you strictly to believe all this, in the fullest sense of the words. And also to believe that the reasons why you, or any one else, are for a long time vainly endeavouring after, and hardly ever attaining, these first-rate virtues, is because you seek them in the way they are not to be found, in a multiplicity of human rules, methods, and contrivances, and not in that simplicity of faith in which those who applied to Christ immediately obtained that which

they asked of Him.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." How short, and simple, and certain a way to peace and comfort, from the misery and burden of sin! What becomes now of your length of time, and exercise, your rules, and methods, and roundabout ways, to be delivered from self, the power of sin, and find the redeeming power and virtue of Christ? Will you say that turning to Christ in faith was once indeed the way for Jews and heathens to enter into life, and be delivered from the power of their sins, but that all this happiness was at an end as soon as Pontius Pilate had nailed this good Redeemer to the cross, and so broke off all immediate union and communion between faith and Christ?

What a folly would it be to suppose that Christ, after His having finished His great work, overcome death, ascended into heaven, with all power in heaven and on earth, was become less a Saviour, and gave less certain and immediate helps to those that by faith turn to Him now, than when He was clothed with the infirmity of our flesh and blood upon earth? Has He less power, after He has conquered, than whilst He was only resisting and fighting with our enemies? Or has He less good will to assist His Church, His own body, now He is in heaven, than He had to assist publicans, sinners, and heathens, before He was glorified as the Redeemer of the world? And vet this must be the case, if our simply turning to Him in faith and hope is not as sure a way of obtaining immediate assistance from Him now, as when He was upon earth.

Theogenes.—You seem, sir, to me to have stepped aside from the point in question, which was not, whether my turning or giving myself up to Christ, in faith in Him, would not do me as much good as it did to them who turned to Him when He was upon earth? But whether my turning in faith and desire, to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, would do all that as fully for me now as faith in Christ did for those who became His disciples?

Theophilus.—I have stuck closely, my friend, to the point before us. Let it be supposed that I had given you a form of prayer in these words: "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world; or, O Thou bread that camest down from heaven; or, Thou that art the resurrection and the life, the light and peace of all holy souls, help me to a living faith in Thee." Would you say that this

was not a prayer of faith in and to Christ, because it did not call Him Jesus, or the Son of God? Answer

me plainly.

Theogenes.—What can I answer you, but that this is a most true and good prayer to Jesus, the Son of the living God? For who else but He was the Lamb of God, and the bread that came down.

Theophilus.-Well answered, my friend. When, therefore, I exhort you to give up yourself in faith and hope, to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, what else do I do but turn you directly to so much faith and hope in the true Lamb of God? For if I ask you what the Lamb of God is and means, must you not tell me that it is and means the perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God? Can you say it is either more or less than this? Must you not therefore say that a faith of hunger, and thirst, and desire of these virtues is in spirit and truth the one very same thing as a faith of hunger, and thirst, and desire of salvation through the Lamb of God? And, consequently, that every sincere wish and desire, every inward inclination of your heart, that presses after these virtues, and longs to be governed by them, is an immediate, direct application to Christ, is worshipping and falling down before Him, is giving up yourself unto Him, and the very perfection of faith in Him.

If you distrust my words, hear the

words of Christ Himself: "Learn of Me (says He), for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here you have the plain truth of our two points fully asserted—first, that to be given up to, or stand in a desire of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, is strictly the same thing as to learn of Christ, or to have faith in Him. Secondly, that this is the one simple, short, and infallible way to overcome or be delivered from all the malignity and burden of self expressed in these words, "and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

And all this, because this simple tendency or inward inclination of your heart to sink down into patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, is truly giving up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam, it is perfectly leaving all that you have, to follow and be with Christ, it is your highest act of faith in Him, and love of Him, the most ardent and earnest declaration of your cleaving to Him with all your heart, and seeking for no salvation but in Him and rom Him. And, therefore, all the good and blessing, pardon and deliverance from sin, that ever happened to any one from any kind or degree of faith and hope, and application to Christ, is sure to be had from this state of heart, which stands continually turned to Him in a hunger and desire of being led and governed by His spirit of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. Oh, Theogenes, could I help you to perceive or feel what a good there is in this state of heart, you would desire it with more eagerness than the thirsty hart desireth the water-brooks, you would think of nothing, desire nothing, but constantly to live in it. It is a security from all evil and all delusion; no difficulty or trial, either of body or mind, no temptation, either within you or without you, but what has its full remedy in this state of heart. You have no questions to ask of any body, no new way that you need inquire after; no oracle that you need to consult, for whilst you shut up yourself, in patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, you are in the very arms of Christ, your whole heart is His dwelling-place, and He lives and works in you, as certainly as He lived in and governed that body and soul which He took from the Virgin Mary.

Learn whatever else you will from men and books, or even from Christ Himself, besides or without these virtues, and you are only a poor wanderer in a barren wilderness, where no water of life is to be found. For Christ is nowhere but in these virtues; and where they are, there is He in His own kingdom. From morning to night let this be the Christ that you follow, and then you will fully escape all the religious delusions that are in the world, and, what is more, all the delusions of your own selfish heart.

For to seek to be saved by patience, meekness, humility of heart, and resignation to God, is truly coming to God through Christ; and when these tempers live and abide in you, as the spirit and aim of your life, then Christ is in you of a truth, and the life that you then lead is not yours, but Christ that liveth in you. For this is following Christ with all your power; you cannot possibly make more haste after Him, you have no other way of walking as He walked, no other way of being like Him, of truly believing in Him, of showing your trust in Him and dependence upon Him, but by wholly giving up yourself to that which He was, viz. to patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God.

Tell me now, have I enough proved to you the short, simple, and certain way of destroying that body of self which lives and works in the four elements of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath?

Theogenes.—Enough of all reason. But as to covetousness, I thank God I cannot charge myself with it, it has no power over me—nay, I naturally abhor it. And I also now clearly see why I have been so long struggling in vain against other selfish tempers.

Theophilus.—Permit me, my friend, to remove your mistake. Had covetousness no power over you, you could have no other selfish tempers to struggle against. They are all dead as soon as covetousness has done working in you. You take covetousness to relate only to the wealth of this world. But this is but one single branch of it, its nature is as large as desire, and wherever selfish

desire is, there is all the evil nature of covetousness.

Now envy, pride, hatred, or wrath can have no possibility of existence in you, but because there is some selfish desire alive in you that is not satisfied. not gratified, but resisted, or disappointed. And therefore so long as selfish tempers, whether of envy, uneasiness, complaint, pride, or wrath, are alive in you, you have the fullest proof that all these tempers are born and bred in and from your own covetousness: that is, from that same selfish bad desire which, when it is turned to the wealth of this world, is called covetousness. For all these four elements of self, or fallen nature, are tied together in one inseparable band, they mutually generate and are generated from one another, they have but one common life, and must all of them live, or all die together. This may show you again the absolute necessity of our one simple and certain way of dying to self, and the absolute insufficiency of all human means whatever to effect it.

For, consider only this, that to be angry at our own anger, to be ashamed of our own pride, and strongly resolve not to be weak, is the upshot of all human endeavours; and yet all this is rather the life than the death of self. There is no help but from a total despair of all human help. When a man is brought to such an inward full conviction, as to have no more hope from all human means, than he hopes to see with

his hands, or hear with his feet, then it is that he is truly prepared to die to self; that is, to give up all thoughts of having or doing any thing that is good in any other way but that of a meek, humble, patient, total resignation of himself to God. All that we do before this conviction is in great ignorance of ourselves, and full of weakness and impurity. Let our zeal be ever so wonderful, yet if it begins sooner, or proceeds farther, or to any other matter, or in any other way than as it is led and guided by this conviction, it is full of delusion. No repentance, however long or laborious, is conversion to God till it falls into this state. For God must do all, or all is nothing; but God cannot do all till all is expected from Him; and all is not expected from Him till, by a true and good despair of every human help, we have no hope, or trust, or longing after any thing but a patient, meek, humble, total resignation to God.

And now, my dear friends, I have brought you to the very place for which I desired this day's conversation; which was to set your feet upon sure ground with regard to the spirit of love. For all that variety of matters through which we have passed has been only a variety of proofs that the spirit of divine love can have no place or possibility of birth in any fallen creature till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self, in a patient, meek, humble resignation to the good power and mercy of God.

And from this state of heart also it is

that the spirit of prayer is borne, which is the desire of the soul turned to God. Stand therefore steadfastly in this will, let nothing else enter into your mind, have no other contrivance, but everywhere, and in every thing, to nourish and keep up this state of heart, and then your house is built upon a rock; you are safe from all danger; the light of heaven and the love of God will begin their work in you, will bless and sanctify every power of your fallen soul, you will be in a readiness for every kind of virtue and good work, and will know what it is to be led by the Spirit of God.

Theogenes.—But, dear Theophilus, though I am so delighted with what you say that I am loth to stop you, yet permit me to mention a fear that rises up in me. Suppose I should find myself so overcome with my own darkness and selfish tempers as not to be able to sink from them into a sensibility of this meek, humble, patient, full resignation to God; what must I then do, or how shall I have the benefit of what you have taught me?

Theophilus.—You are then at the very time and place of receiving the fullest benefit from it, and practising it with the greatest advantage to yourself. For though this patient, meek resignation is to be exercised with regard to all outward things and occurrences of life, yet it chiefly respects our own inward state, the troubles, perplexities, weaknesses, and disorders of our own fallen souls. And to stand turned to a patient, meek, humble resignation to God, when your

own impatience, wrath, pride, and irresignation attacks yourself, is a higher and more beneficial performance of this duty, than when you stand turned to meekness and patience when attacked by the pride, or wrath, or disorderly passions of other people. I say, stand turned to this patient, humble resignation, for this is your true performance of this duty at that time; and though you may have no comfortable sensibility of your performing it, yet in this state you may always have one full proof of the truth and reality of it; and that is, when you seek for help no other way, nor in any thing else, neither from men nor books, but wholly leave and give up yourself to be helped by the mercy of God. And thus, be your state what it will, you may always have the full benefit of this short and sure way of resigning up yourself to God. And the greater the perplexity of your distress is, the nearer you are to the greatest and best relief, provided you have but patience to expect it all from God. For nothing brings you so near to divine relief as the extremity of distress; for the goodness of God hath no other name or nature, but the helper of all that wants to be helped; and nothing can possibly hinder your finding this goodness of God, and every other gift and grace that you stand in need of; nothing can hinder or delay it but your turning from the only fountain of life and living water, to some cracked cistern of your own making; to this or that method, opinion, division, or

subdivision, amongst Christians, carnally expecting some mighty things, either from Samaria or Jerusalem. Paul or Apollos, which are only and solely to be had by worshipping the Father in spirit and truth; which is then only done when your whole heart, and soul, and spirit trusts wholly and solely to the operation of that God within you. in whom we live, move, and have our being. And be assured of this, as a most certain truth, that we have neither more nor less of the divine operation within us, because of this or that outward form or manner of our life, but just and strictly in that degree, as our faith, and hope, and trust, and dependence upon God is more or less in us.

What a folly, then, to be so often perplexed about the way to God! For nothing is the way to God, but our heart; God is nowhere else to be found, and the heart itself cannot find Him, or be helped by any thing else to find Him, but by its own love of Him, faith in Him, dependence upon Him, resignation to Him, and expectation of all from Him.

These are short, but full articles of true religion, which carry salvation along with them, which make a true and full offering and oblation of our whole nature to the divine operation, and also a true and full confession of the holy Trinity in unity. For as they look wholly to the Father, as blessing us with the operation of His own word and Spirit, so they truly confess and worship the holy Trinity of God. And as they

ascribe all to, and expect all from, this Deity alone, so they make the truest and best of all confessions, that there is no God but one.

Let then Arians, semi-Arians, and Socinians, who puzzle their laborious brains to make paper images of a trinity for themselves, have nothing from you but your pity and prayers; your foundation standeth sure, whilst you look for all your salvation through the Father, working life in your soul by His own Word and Spirit, which dwell in Him, and are one life, both in Him and you.

Theogenes.—I can never enough thank you, Theophilus, for this good and comfortable answer to my scrupulous fear. It seems now as if I could always know how to find full relief in this humble, meek, patient, total resignation of myself to God. It is, as you said, a remedy that is always at hand, equally practicable at all times, and never in greater reality than when my own tempers are making war against it in my own heart.

You have quite carried your point with me; the God of patience, meekness, and love is the one God of my heart. It is now the whole bent and desire of my soul to seek for all my salvation in and through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, resigned, suffering Lamb of God, who alone hath power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. He is the bread of God that came down from heaven, of which the soul must eat, or perish and

pine in everlasting hunger. He is the eternal love and meekness, that left the bosom of His Father, to be Himself the resurrection of meekness and love in all the darkened, wrathful souls of fallen men. What a comfort is it to think that this Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Light of the world, who is the glory of heaven and the joy of angels, is as near to us, as truly in the midst of us, as He is in the midst of heaven. And that not a thought, look, and desire of our heart, that presses towards Him, longing to catch, as it were, one small spark of His heavenly nature, but is in as sure a way of finding Him, touching Him, and drawing virtue from Him, as the woman who was healed by longing to touch the border of His garment.

This doctrine also makes me quite weary and ashamed of all my own natural tempers, as so many marks of the beast upon me; every whisper of my soul that stirs up impatience, uneasiness, resentment, pride, and wrath within me, shall be rejected with a "get thee behind me, Satan," for it is his, and has its whole nature from him. To rejoice in a resentment gratified, appears now to me to be quite frightful. For what is it in reality but rejoicing that my own serpent of self has new life and strength given to it, and that the precious Lamb of God is denied entrance into my soul. For this is the strict truth of the matter. For to give in to resentment, and go willingly to gratify it, is calling up the courage of your own serpent, and truly helping it to

be more stout and valiant, and successful in you. On the other hand, to give up all resentment of every kind, and on every occasion, however artfully, beautifully, outwardly coloured, and to sink down into the humility of meekness under all contrariety, contradiction, and injustice, always turning the other cheek to the smiter, however haughty, is the best of all prayers, the surest of all means, to have nothing but Christ living and working in you, as the Lamb of God, that taketh away every sin that ever had power over your soul.

What a blindness was it in me to think that I had no covetousness, because the love of pelf was not felt by me? For to covet is to desire; and what can it signify whether I desire this or that? If I desire anything but that which God would have me to be and do, I stick in the mire of covetousness, and must have all that evil and disquiet living and working in me which robs misers of their peace both with God and man.

Oh, sweet resignation of myself to God, happy death of every selfish desire, blessed unction of a holy life, the only driver of all evil out of my soul, be thou my guide and governor wherever I go! Nothing but thee can take me from myself, nothing but thee can lead me to God; hell has no power where thou art; nor can heaven hide itself from thee. Oh, may I never indulge a thought, bring forth a word, or do any thing for myself or others, but under the influence of blessed inspiration.

Forgive, dear Theophilus, this transport of my soul! I could not stop it. The sight, though distant, of this heavenly Canaan, this Sabbath of the soul, freed from the miserable labour of self, to rest in meekness, humility, patience, and resignation under the Spirit of God, is like the joyful voice of the Bridegroom to my soul, and leaves no wish in me but to be at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Theophilus.-Thither, Theogenes, you must certainly come, if you keep to the path of meekness, humility, and patience, under a full resignation to God. But if you go aside from it, let the occasion seem ever so glorious, or the effects ever so wonderful to you, it is only preparing for yourself a harder death. For die you must, to all and every thing that you have worked or done under any other spirit but that of meekness, humility, and true resignation to God. Every thing else, be it what it will, hath its rise from the fire of nature, it belongs to nothing else, and must of all necessity be given up, lost, and taken from you again by fire, either here or hereafter.

For these virtues are the only wedding garment; they are the lamps and vessels well furnished with oil.

There is nothing that will do in the stead of them; they must have their own full and perfect work in you, if not before, yet certainly after the death of the body, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen, wrathful state. And all this is no more than is implied in this Scripture doctrine, viz. that there

is no possibility of salvation but in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our souls. And when this Lamb of God has brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed, and our virgin hearts made ready for the marriage feast.

This marriage feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union that can be between God and the soul in this life. Or, in other words, it is the birthday of the spirit of love in our souls, which, whenever we attain, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as will blot out the remembrance of every thing that we called peace or joy before.

In the letter on the spirit of love, you have been shown, according to the mystery of all things opened by the goodness of God, in the blessed Behmen, the time and place of its birth. That it neither does, nor can possibly, begin any sooner than at the entrance or manifestation of the divine light, in the three first wrathful, self-tormenting properties of nature, which are and must be the ground of every natural life, and must be darkness, rage, and torment, till the light of God, breaking in upon them, changes all their painful working into the strongest sensibilities of love, joy, and triumph, in the perception and possession of a new divine life.

Now all that we have said to-day, of the necessity of the fallen soul's dying

to self, by meekness, patience, humility, and full resignation to God, is strictly the same thing, and asserted from the same ground, as when it was then said that the three first properties of nature must have their wrathful activity taken from them by the light of God breaking in upon them, or manifesting itself in them. Now this was always the state of nature, it never was a state of wrath, because it never was without the light of God in it. But the natural, creaturely life, having a possibility of falling, and having actually fallen from God, has found and felt (what never ought to have been found and felt) viz. what nature is in itself, without the manifestation of the Deity in it.

Therefore, as sure as the light of God, or the entrance of the Deity into the three first properties of nature, is absolutely necessary to make nature to be a heavenly kingdom of light and love, so sure and certain is it that the creaturely life, that is fallen from God under the wrathful first properties of nature, can have no deliverance from it, cannot have a birth of heavenly light and love, by any other possible way but that of dying to self, by meekness, humility, patience, and full resignation to God.

And the reason is this. It is because the will is the leader of the creaturely life, and it can have nothing but that to which its will is turned. And therefore it cannot be saved from, or raised out of, the wrath of nature, till its will turns from nature, and wills to be no longer driven by it. But it cannot turn from nature, or show a will to come from under its power, any other way than by turning and giving up itself to that meekness, humility, patience, and resignation to God, which, so far as it goes, is a leaving, rejecting, and dying to all the guidance of nature.

And thus you see that this one simple way is, according to the immutable nature of things, the one only possible and absolutely necessary way to God. It is as possible to go two contrary ways at once, as to go to God any other way than this. But what is best of all, this way is absolutely infallible: nothing can defeat it. And all this infallibility is fully grounded in the twofold character of our Saviour-(1) As He is the Lamb of God, a principle and source of all meekness and humility in the soul. And (2) as He is the light of eternity, that blesses eternal nature, and turns it into a kingdom of heaven.

For, in this twofold respect, He has a power of redeeming us, which nothing can hinder; but, sooner or later, He must see all His and our enemies under His feet, and all that is fallen in Adam into death must rise and return into a unity of an eternal life in God.

For as the Lamb of God He has all power to bring forth in us a sensibility and a weariness of our own wrathful state, and a willingness to fall from it into meekness, humility, patience, and resignation to that mercy of God which alone can help us. And when we are

thus weary and heavy laden, and willing to get rest to our souls in meek, humble, patient resignation to God, then it is that He, as the light of God and heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us, turns our darkness into light, our sorrow into joy, and begins that kingdom of God and divine love within us, which will never have an end.

Need I say any more, Theogenes, to show you how to come out of the wrath of your evil, earthly nature, into the sweet peace and joy of the spirit of love? Neither notions, nor speculations, nor heat, nor fervour, nor rules, nor methods, can bring it forth. It is the child of light, and cannot possibly have any birth in you but only and solely from the light of God rising in your own soul, as it rises in heavenly beings. But the light of God cannot arise, or be found in you, by any art or contrivance of your own, but only and solely in the way of that meekness, humility, and patience, which waits, trusts, resigns to, and expects all from the inward, living, life-giving operation of the triune God within you; creating, quickening, and reviving in your fallen soul that birth, and image, and likeness of the holy Trinity, in which the first father of mankind was created.

Theogenes.—You need say no more, Theophilus; you have not only removed that difficulty which brought us hither, but have by a variety of things, fixed and confirmed us in a full belief of that great truth elsewhere asserted, namely, "That there is but one salvation for all mankind,

and that is the life of God in the soul. And also, that there is but one possible way for man to attain this life of God, not one for a Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for a heathen. No, God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one, and that is the desire of the soul turned to God."

Therefore, dear Theophilus, adieu. If we see you no more in this life, you have sufficiently taught us how to seek and find every kind of goodness, blessing, and happiness in God alone.









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